



THE
ORIGIN, OBJECT,
AND
ORGANIZATION
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

FROM THE FRENCH OF
FRANCOIS DUPUIS.

BY
CHARLES SOUTHWELL,
AUTHOR OF "THE DIFFICULTIES OF CHRISTIANITY," ETC.

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by the advocates of Christianity.—*Translator's Preface.*

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

WHEN a mere youth, and before my opinions with regard to Christianity assumed a definite or palpable shape, I was fortunate enough to attract the notice of a highly intelligent Swiss, who gave me a copy of the abridged edition of Dupuis' great and justly celebrated work, *L'Origine de tous les Cultes* (the Origin of all the Worships). One condition, and only one, attached to the gift—which was that I should read and endeavour to understand it. The condition was fairly complied with: I read it with avidity *twice*, the second time with keener relish than the first. A complete edition of that elaborate work did not fall in my way till some six years since, when I found it by the merest chance while looking for a very different sort of book in the British Museum. After comparing the abridged with the unabridged edition, I felt convinced that the former contained all that was pithy and essential in the latter. My dear little edition became dearer to me than ever. One chapter I particularly admired—that which professes to explain the Nature, as well as demonstrate the Origin, of Christianity. My impression then was, and time has but deepened it, that nothing has been written about

the Christian religion at all comparable to that chapter. Complete in itself, full of historical truths and the sage reflections they seem naturally to have called forth, I have long thought that he who devoted himself successfully to the task of rendering it into English would confer a lasting benefit upon society. Assuredly such a work is much needed, as well by the opponents as the advocates of Christianity. Believing so, I resolved to encounter the difficulty of translating and the risk of publishing it. My chief and most anxious desire has been to preserve throughout the sense and spirit of my illustrious author. Where a literal translation was grammatically and idiomatically possible, such translation has been attempted, but in no case has the spirit or sense of the original text been intentionally violated or departed from. Readers who seek in this work the wit of Voltaire or the eloquence of Volney will be disappointed, for the style of Dupuis, though clear, copious, bold, uncompromising, and original, is neither adorned by eloquence nor seasoned by wit. That it loses much and gains nothing by my translation I am painfully sensible, but it is hoped our professional critics will appreciate the difficulties with which I have had to contend—difficulties which, however nobly struggled against, can never be entirely overcome.

THE TRUE ORIGIN,

ETC.

IF there be a fable which seems to escape the analysis we have undertaken to make of religious poems and sacred legends, without doubt, it is that of Christ, or the legend which, under that name, has the Sun for its object. The hatred that the sectaries of that religion, ever anxious to secure dominancy for their worship, have sworn to the adorers of Nature, of the Sun, of the Moon, and of the Stars, to the Greek and Roman divinities, of whom they overthrew the temples and the altars, would lead us to suppose that their religion did not form part of the universal religion, if the errors of a people with regard to the real object of their worship proved aught save their ignorance, and if the worship of Hercules, of Bacchus, of Isis, ceased to be the worship of the Sun and of the Moon, because that, in the opinion of the Greeks, Hercules and Bacchus were men placed in the rank of gods, and that, in the opinion of the Egyptians, Isis was a benevolent princess who had formerly reigned in Egypt.

The Romans ridiculed the divinities adored on the banks of the Nile; they proscribed Anubis, Isis, and Serapis, and yet they themselves adored Mercury, Diana, Ceres, and Pluto, that is to say, absolutely the same gods under other names and other forms: so great is the empire of names on the minds of the ignorant vulgar! Plato said

that the Greeks, from the remotest antiquity, adored the Sun, the Moon, the Stars; and Plato did not perceive that down to his own time, they worshipped the very same gods, under the names of Hercules, Apollo, Diana, Esculapius, &c. Convinced of this truth—well assured that the opinion of a people with regard to their religion proves nothing but their opinion, and does not at all affect its nature, we will carry our researches as far as to the sanctuary of modern Rome, and we shall find evidence abundantly conclusive that the Lamb God who there is adored is the ancient Jupiter of the Romans, who often assumed the same form under the name of Ammon, that is to say, the form of the Ram, or of the Lamb of spring; that the vanquisher of the prince of darkness at Easter is the same god who, in the poem of the Dionysiacs, triumphs over Typhon at the same epoch, and repairs the evil that the chief of darkness had introduced into the world under those forms of the serpent with which Typhon was invested. We there shall meet, also, under the name of Peter, the old Janus with his keys and his barque at the head of the twelve divinities of the twelve months whose altars are at his feet. We feel that we shall have to conquer many prejudices, and that many who would accord to us that Bacchus and Hercules were nothing but personifications of the Sun would not so readily admit that the worship of Christ is the worship of the Sun. But let readers reflect that the Greeks and the Romans would willingly have admitted it in face of the proofs we are about to produce, whilst they would not so readily have consented to acknowledge in Hercules and in Bacchus merely heroes and princes, who, by their exploits, had merited the honour of being ranked among the gods. Men are constantly on their guard against whatever is likely to destroy those illusions and prejudices which education, example, and the habit of believing, have fortified. Despite, therefore, all the force of proofs the most lumi-

nous with which we shall support our assertion, we only hope to convince the sage, unprejudiced, mind, the sincere friend of truth, who is disposed to sacrifice his prejudices the moment he is convinced they *are* prejudices. It is true that we write but for him; the rest are devoted to ignorance and to the priests, who live at the expense of their credulity, and conduct them as a vile flock.

We examine not if the Christian religion is a revealed religion, because in this comparatively enlightened age, belief in revealed ideas and their pretended revealers is confined to the silly or the stupid. Philosophy has so far advanced as to render superfluous and absurd any dispute with regard to the communication of divinity with man other than that made by the light of reason through the contemplation of Nature. We shall not even commence by examining if there ever really existed either a philosopher or an impostor called Christ who may have established the religion called Christianity; for even if we went so far as to admit the last point Christians would by no means be satisfied unless we acknowledged in Christ an inspired man, a son of God, a God himself crucified for our sins: yes, it is a God they need, a God who formerly ate upon the earth, and to-day is eaten. But we are ill inclined to carry our condescension thus far. As to those who would be content if we made of Christ simply a philosopher, or a man, without attaching to him anything divine, we invite them to examine that question, when we have analysed the worship of the Christians, independently of him or of those who established it; whether it owe its institution to one or to many; whether its origin date from the reign of Augustus or of Tiberius, as the modern legend seems to indicate, and as is vulgarly believed; or whether it may be traced to a far higher antiquity, and that it took its source in the Mithraic worship established in Persia, in Armenia, in Cappadocia, and even at Rome, as we think. The important point is well and thoroughly

to know the nature of the Christian religion wherever it originated or whoever may have been its author. But it will not be difficult for us to prove that it is still the worship of Nature, especially of the Sun, her first and most brilliant agent, and that the hero of the legends known under the name of Gospel is the same hero who has been sung with much more genius in the ancient poems upon Bacchus, upon Osiris, upon Hercules, upon Adonis, and other solar personifications.

When we shall have demonstrated that the pretended history of a God who is born of a virgin at the solstice of winter, and rises from the dead at Easter, or at the equinox of spring, after having descended into hell; of a God who leads with him a train or retinue of twelve apostles, the chief of whom has all the attributes of Janus; of a God who vanquishes the prince of darkness, causes man to pass into the empire of light, and repairs the evils of Nature, is nothing but a solar fable, precisely similar to those we have already analysed, an examination of the question, Was there a man called Christ? will appear as little important as an examination of the question, Was there a prince called Hercules? provided it is clearly shown that the being consecrated by a worship, under the name of Christ, is the Sun, and that the marvels of the legend or the poem have that star for their object. For then it will appear proved that Christians are nothing but adorers of the Sun, and that their priests palm upon us as divine the very same religion as was preached by the priests of Peru, whom they so cruelly slaughtered. Let us see, then, what are the bases on which repose the dogmas of that religion.

The first base is the existence of a great disorder introduced into the world by a serpent who has invited a woman to gather forbidden fruit—a fault the tremendous consequence of which has been the knowledge of evil that man until then had not experienced, and which could only

be remedied by a divine vanquisher of death and of the prince of darkness. Behold the fundamental dogma of the Christian religion! For in the opinion of Christians the incarnation of Christ was absolutely necessary in order to a reparation or cure of the evil introduced into the universe by the serpent who seduced the first woman and the first man. Vain will be any attempt to separate these two dogmas the one from the other: no sin—no reparation; no guilt on the part of Adam and Eve—no redemption on the part of Jesus Christ. But that fall of the first man, or that supposition of the double state of man at first created by the good principle, enjoying all the good that was spread abroad in the world, and afterwards passing under the dominion of the bad principle, and to a state of misery and degradation, from which he could only be drawn by the principle of light and goodness, is a cosmogonic fable, of nature exactly the same as those devised by the Persian Magi—or Priests—with regard to Ormusd and Ahrimanes, or rather it is neither more nor less than a copy of these. Let us consult their books. We have already seen in the fourth chapter of this work how the Magi represented the world under the emblem of an egg divided into twelve parts, of which six belonged to Ormusd, or the creator of good and of light, and the other six to Ahrimanes the author of evil and of darkness; and how the good and the evil of nature resulted from the combined action of these two principles. We have also observed that the six portions of the empire of the good principle comprehended the six months which flow from the equinox of spring as far as to that of autumn, and that the six portions of the empire of the bad principle embrace the six months of autumn and winter. It is thus that the time of the annual revolution was poetically distributed between these two chiefs; one of whom organised existences, ripened the fruits, &c., while the other destroyed the effects pro-

duced by the first, and troubled that harmony of which the earth and the sky exhibited the glorious spectacle during the six months of spring and of summer. That cosmogonic idea has been rendered by these Magi in another and equally interesting manner. They supposed that from time without bounds, or eternity, was born a limited period which unceasingly renewed itself. They divided that period into twelve thousand parts, which in the style of allegory they called years. Six thousand of these parts belonged to the good principle, and the other six to the bad; and in order to guard against misappreciation or mistake, they made each of these divisions (that is to say, each thousand) answer to one of the signs through which the sun passes during each of the twelve months. The first thousand, said they, answers to the Lamb, the second to the Bull, the third to the Twins, &c. It is under these six first signs, or under the signs of the six first months of the equinoctial year, that they fixed the reign and the beneficent action of the principle of light; and it is under the six other signs that they fixed the action of the bad principle. It is at the seventh sign, answering to the Balance, or to the first of the signs of autumn, the season of fruits and winter, that they made to commence the empire of darkness and of evil. Their reign lasted till the return of the sun to the sign of the Lamb, which answers to March and to Easter. Behold the basis of their theological system which recognised the distribution of the opposing forces of the two principles to the action of which man found himself submitted during each year, or during each solar revolution. It is the tree of good and evil near which Nature had placed him. Hear themselves speak:—

Time, says the author of the *Boundesh*, is twelve thousand years; the thousands of God comprehend the Lamb, the Bull, the Twins, the Crab, the Lion, and the Virgin, which makes six thousand years. Substitute for the word

years that of parts or small periods of time, and for the names of the signs those of the months, and then you will have March, April, May, June, July, and August; that is to say, the fine months of periodical vegetation. After the thousands of God comes the Balance; then Ahrimanes runs through the world. Afterwards comes the Archer, or Sagittarius, and Afrasiab causes evil, &c.

Substitute for the names of the other signs those of the months September, October, November, December, January, February, and you will have the six periods affected to the bad principle, and to its effects, which are the frosts, the snows, the winds, and excessive rains. You will perceive that it is in September, or in the season of apples, that the evil genius commences to spread in the world his fatal influence. It is then that man knows the evil of which he was ignorant during the spring and the summer, in the fine climates of the northern hemisphere.

Here we should look for the poetic idea sought to be expressed by the author of Genesis in the fable of the woman who, seduced by a serpent, plucked the fatal apple which, like the box of Pandora, was a source of evil to all mankind.

“The Supreme,” says the author of *Modimel el Tawarik*, “at first created man and the bull in an elevated place, where they remained for three thousand years without evil. These three comprehend the Lamb, the Bull, and the Twins; afterwards they remained upon the earth during another three thousand years, without experience of pain or contradiction; and these three answered to the Crab, to the Lion, and to the Virgin.” Let the reader observe well the six thousand designated above as the thousands of God, and the signs affected to the empire of the good principle. After that at the seventh thousand answering to the Balance (that is to say September, according to our manner of calculating), evil appears, and man begins to labour.

In another part of the same cosmogony we read that all the duration of the world from the commencement to the end has been fixed at twelve thousand years; that man in the superior part of the globe (that is to say in the northern and superior hemisphere) remained without evil during three thousand years. He was also without evil during another three thousand years; then appeared Ahrimanes, who caused the evils and the combats in the seventh thousand (that is to say, under the Balance upon which is placed the celestial serpent): then was produced the mixture of good and evil.

It was in effect there that the limits of the empire of the two principles each other touched; there was the point of contact between good and evil, or, to speak in the allegorical language of Genesis, it was there that was planted the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the fruit of which man could not enjoy without immediately passing under the dominion of the bad principle or Devil, to whom belonged the signs of winter and of autumn. As far as to that moment man had been the favoured of the skies, Ormusd had loaded him with benefits; but that benevolent God had in Ahrimanes a rival and an enemy, who sought to poison his most precious gifts; and man became his victim at the moment of the retreat of the God of day towards the southern climates. Then the nights regained their empire, and the murderous breath of Ahrimanes, under the form, or under the ascendant, of the serpent of the constellations, devastated the fine gardens where Ormusd had placed man. It is there we discover the theological idea that the author of Genesis has taken from the cosmogony of the Persians, and that he has adorned in his own peculiar manner. Observe, good reader, how Zoroaster, or the author of the Genesis of the Magi, expresses himself while painting the successive action of the two principles in the world.

Ormusd, says he, divine light and good principle, reveals to Zoroaster, that he has given to man a place of delights

and of abundance. If I had not given that place of delights, none other could have given it. That place is Eiren, which at the beginning was more beautiful than the entire world, which exists by my power. Nothing ever equalled the beauty of that place of delights that I had created. I have acted first; and then Petiare (Ahrimanes, or the bad principle), full of death, made in the river the great adder, parent of winter, which spreads cold in the water, in the earth, and in the trees.

It results from the formal and significant terms of this cosmogony that the evil introduced into the world is winter. Who will provide a remedy? The God of spring, or the Sun, in his passage under the sign of the Lamb, of which the Christ of the Christians takes the forms. For it is the Lamb who repairs the evils of the world, and it is under that emblem he is represented in the monuments of the first Christians.

It is evident that the evil here referred to is physical and periodical evil which the earth may figuratively be said to experience every year, in consequence of the retreat of the Sun, source of light and life for all that inhabits the surface of our globe. That cosmogony contains, then, nothing more than an allegorical picture of the phenomena of Nature and the influence of the celestial signs. For the Serpent, or the great adder, who brings back winter, is, as the Balance, one of the constellations placed upon the limits which separate the empire of the two principles, that is to say, here upon the equinox of autumn. Behold the veritable Serpent, of which Ahrimanes assumed the forms in the fable of the Magi, as in that of the Jews, to bring evil into the world! Also, the Persians called that malevolent genius the *star serpent*, and the *serpent celestial* the *serpent of Eve*. It is in the sky that they make Ahrimanes appear under the form of a serpent. What follows from the Boundesh, or the Genesis of the Persians, well expresses the meaning of the Magi. "Ah-

rimanes, or the principle of evil and of darkness—he through whom comes evil into the world—moves in the sky under the form of a *great adder*, accompanied by Dews, or bad geniuses, who seek but to destroy.” And further: “When the bad geniuses desolate the world, and that the *star serpent* makes himself a passage between the sky and the earth; that is to say, mounts upon the horizon,” &c.

But at what epoch of the annual revolution does the celestial serpent, united to the Sun, mount upon the horizon with that star? It is when the Sun has arrived at the Balance, upon which the constellation of the serpent extends itself; that is to say, at the seventh sign, setting out from the Lamb, or the sign under which the reader has seen that the Magi fixed the commencement of the reign of the bad principle and the introduction of evil into the universe.

In Genesis, or the cosmogony of the Jews, our first parent is described as holding converse with a serpent; but every judicious reader feels that descriptions of that kind are perfectly agreeable to the genius of Orientals and to the character of allegory. The foundation of the theological idea is absolutely the same. Jewish writers do not, it is true, say that the serpent brings back winter which destroys the best gifts of nature; but they say that man, discovering his own nakedness, felt a desire for clothing, and that he was reduced to the necessity of tilling the earth—an operation which answers to autumn. They do not say that it was at the seventh sign, or under the seventh sign, that that change in the state of man took place; but they divide or distribute into six periods the action of the good principle, and it is at the seventh that they mark his repose or the cessation of his energy, as well as the fall of man in the season of fruits, and the introduction of evil by the serpent, of which the Devil or the *bad principle* assumed the form in order to tempt our first parents.

They even fix the scene in those countries comprised under the name of Eiren, or Iran, and towards the sources of the great rivers of the Euphrates, and of the Tigris; only instead of Eiren, the Hebrew copyists have put Eden, the two letters r and d in that language being very similar. Some expressions concerning the division of time to be found in the Genesis of the Hebrews are not employed in that of the Persians; but the Genesis of the ancient Tuscans, conceived in the same terms as that of the Hebrews, conserves that allegorical account of the division of time, during which is displayed the all-powerful action of that soul of nature we call Sun. The idea is thus expressed in the Genesis of the Tuscans:—

“The divine architect of the Universe has employed and consecrated twelve thousand years to the works he has produced, and he has divided them into twelve periods of time, distributed in the twelve signs or houses of the Sun.”

“In the first thousand he has made the sky and earth.”

“In the second the firmament that we call sky.”

“In the third he made the sea, and the waters which are under or above the earth.”

“In the fourth he made the great lights of Nature.”

“In the fifth he made the souls of birds, of reptiles, of quadrupeds, of animals who live in the air, upon the earth, and amid the waters.”

“In the sixth thousand, he made man.”

“It seems,” adds the author, “that the six first thousand years having preceded the formation of man, the human species ought to subsist during the other six thousand years; so that all the time necessary to the consummation of that great work may be included in a period of twelve thousand years.”

We have seen that that period was a fundamental dogma in the theology of the Persians, and that it was distributed in two equal portions between the two principles. This

word *thousand* has been replaced by that of *days* in the Genesis of the Hebrews; but the number six is always conserved, as in that of the Tuscans and of the Persians. The ancient Persians also, according to Chardin, took the months of the year for the six days of the week that God employed at the creation; from whence it follows that, in the allegorical and mystical style, the expressions a thousand years or a thousand days, simply mean months, since they were made to correspond with the signs of the Zodiac, which are their natural measure. As for the rest, the Genesis of the Hebrews reproduces absolutely the same expressions as that of the Tuscans. To them the author of our cosmogony is indebted for many of his expressions, as well as the distinction of the two principles, and that curious history of the very curious serpent who, under the name of Ahrimanes, and star serpent, played so conspicuous a part in the Genesis of the Persians. That which combines the leading incidents and most remarkable features of both cosmogonies, that is to say, the Genesis of the Persians, and which furnishes the key of the two others, we accept as the original. Readers will also find in this work evidence clear and abundant that it is above all from the religion of the Magi that Christians have derived their Christianity.

We will not seek then in the Genesis of the Hebrews more than we find in the Genesis of the Magi. And we shall see, in the marvellous recitals ascribed to Moses, not a history of the first man, but an allegorical fable borrowed from the Persians, regarding the state of man, submitted here below to the domination of two principles, in other words, the grand mystery of the universal administration of the world, consecrated in the theology of all peoples, retraced under all forms in the ancient initiations, and taught by the legislators, by the philosophers, by the poets, and the theologians, as we are told in Plutarch. Allegory was the veil with which *sacred science* enveloped

itself, in order, if we may believe Sanconiathon, to imprint respect for the initiated or knowing on the minds of the uninitiated or ignorant.

The Hebrew as well as the Christian doctors admit that the books ascribed to Moses are written in an allegorical style; that they often enclose a sense totally different from that which the surface or mere letter presents; and that we shall arrive at false ideas of God, if we look no deeper than the bark which covers the tree of sacred science. It is above all in the first and second chapter of Genesis, that they acknowledge a concealed and allegorical sense, of which, they say, we should take care not to give an interpretation to the vulgar. Maimonides, a celebrated and very learned Rabbi, says,

“We should not understand that which is written in the book of creation in a literal sense, or entertain with regard to it such ideas as are received by the common people; otherwise our ancient sages never would have so strongly recommended us to conceal the sense, and not to raise the veil which conceals the truth which it contains. Taken literally the book of Genesis gives ideas of God altogether extravagant and absurd. Whoever is able to divine the true sense of that scripture ought carefully to guard himself against divulging it. Our sages often repeat to us that maxim; above all, they would have us act upon it in respect of the intelligence of the work of the six days. It is possible that an individual, either by himself or aided by others, may become enlightened enough to divine the sense of it; but he ought to conceal such knowledge, or if he speak of it, he should do so obscurely, as I myself do, leaving the rest to be imagined or divined by those who are able to understand me.”

Maimonides adds that the genius for enigma was not peculiar to Moses and the Jewish doctors, but that it was common to all the sages of antiquity; and he is unquestionably right—at least so far as regards the Orientals.

This opinion with regard to the sacred books of the Hebrews was plainly enunciated by the Jewish writer Philo. He composed a Treatise concerning *Allegories*, in which he explained, in a figurative sense, the tree of life, the waters of Paradise, and the other fictions of Genesis. Although far from happy in his explanation, he clearly perceived the absurdity of accepting those recitals according to the letter. It is admitted, said Origen, by those who are acquainted with Scripture, that there all is hidden beneath the veil of enigma and parable. That doctor and all his disciples regarded as more especially allegorical the history of Adam and the fable concerning a terrestrial Paradise.

Augustine, in his *City of God*, frankly allows that many enlightened persons saw in the adventure of Eve and the Serpent an allegorical fiction. The learned saint, after considering many explanations of that fiction, all of which were drawn from or had reference to the principles of morality, observes that a better explanation might be found; adding, somewhat inconsistently, that he had no objection to such explanation, provided always we saw in the history of Adam and Eve a real as well as fabulous history.

We know not how Saint Augustine is able to reconcile fable with history, an allegorical fiction with a real fact. If he holds to that reality, it is because a denial thereof would involve still grosser contradictions; to wit, the contradictory suppositions that the mission of Christ was real—that he actually redeemed us from sin committed by the first man—and that, nevertheless, the two first chapters of Genesis are simply allegorical. As he desired us to believe the redemption from evil by Christ was historical fact, it was essential he should show that the adventure of Adam, of Eve, and of the Serpent, was also historical fact, for the one is intimately connected with the other.

The very great improbability of that romance plucked from him a precious confession—the confession that we

must have recourse to an allegorical explanation in order to escape the grossest absurdities. We may justly say with Beausobre, that Augustine did, in effect, abandon the Old Testament to the Manicheans, who wrote *false* against the three first chapters of Genesis. Beausobre thought it impossible to conserve the literal sense without wounding piety, without attributing to God what is unworthy of him, and, therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the honor of Moses and the credit of his history to have recourse to allegory. What man of good sense, said Origen, can persuade himself there was a first, a second, a third day, and that these days had each their evening and their morning, without Sun, Moon, or Stars? What man is simple enough to believe that God, performing the functions of a gardener, planted a garden in the East? That the tree of life was a veritable tree, bearing veritable fruit, which had the property of conserving life, &c. Not satisfied with ridiculing the literal acceptation, Origen compares the fable of the temptation of Adam to that of the birth of Love, whose father was Porus, or Abundance, and whose mother was Poverty. He maintains that in the Old Testament there is much which, if taken literally, cannot be true; in other words, is but fiction which conceals some useful truth.

If the Christian Doctors, if the Fathers of the Church, notwithstanding their strong disposition all to believe, found themselves unable to digest so many gross absurdities, and knew not how to obtain the sense of these sacred enigmas without the key of allegory, it surely will be permitted that we, who live in an age when men feel the necessity of reasoning rather than believing, attach to these marvellous histories the character which all antiquity has given to religious dogmas, and raise the veil of allegory that conceals them. All appears absurd in the Mosaic history, when we are resolved to accept it as a history of facts or circumstances which actually occurred. Ideas such

as that of a God, or supreme and eternal Cause, who assumes a bodily shape for the pleasure of promenading in a garden; of a woman who converses with a serpent, listening to and receiving his counsels; of a man and a woman organized to reproduce, yet destined to be immortal, and beget through an infinity of ages other beings immortal as themselves, who in their turn would reproduce, and be nourished by the fruits of a garden which was destined to be their dwelling-place for eternity; of a plucked though forbidden apple which causes death and imprints the hereditary stain of a crime on many generations of men who had nothing whatever to do with the larceny—crime not to be pardoned till men should have committed another infinitely more terrible, a Deicide, if such crime be possible: the woman since that epoch condemned to bring forth in agony, as if the pains of childbirth were not a consequence of her organization or suffered in common with all other animals who never partook of the fatal apple: the serpent forced to crawl, as if a reptile without feet was likely to do anything else: appear to us unworthy of credit. So many absurd and foolish ideas combined in one or two chapters of that marvellous book can only be accepted as genuine history by men who have extinguished the sacred flame of reason in the mire of prejudice. If there be one among our readers, whose courageous credulity is in a state to digest them, we frankly and fervently entreat him to proceed no farther with this work, but at once return to the study of Tom Thumb, Bluebeard, the Lives of the Saints and the Oracles of Balaam's Ass. Philosophy is for men—children understand it not. Those who consent to acknowledge in Christ a Redeemer God while refusing to admit the literal truth of the adventure of Adam and Eve, and the Serpent, and the Fall which rendered the redemption necessary, we invite to clear themselves from the reproach of inconsistency. If the fault is not real what in effect becomes of the re-

paration? or if the facts occurred in a sense totally different from that announced by the text of Genesis, what confidence can we repose in an author who confessedly deceives, and whose deception is the basis upon which rests the entire superstructure of Christianity? If Christians admit there is a concealed sense in the Genesis of the Hebrews, they must have recourse to allegory. We deny that the first page will bear a literal interpretation; and it is for us to shew that our idea is worthy of acceptance. Let the reader judge our work; we demand nothing more, nothing less—for we are far from desiring that he should examine our arguments in a blindly credulous spirit. We cite texts—we name planetary positions—it is for the reader to verify them; we draw inferences therefrom—it is for the reader to rightly appreciate those inferences. Here an abridged recapitulation of our argument will be useful.

According to the principles of the cosmogony or Genesis of the Magi (with which that of the Jews has most affinity, since both placed man in a garden of delights, where a serpent introduces evil), from time without bounds was born a limited period, divided into twelve parts, six of which belonged to light, six to darkness, six to the creative and six to the destructive action, six to the good, and six to the evil of Nature. That period includes the annual revolution of the sky or of the world, which the Magi represented by their mystic egg, divided into twelve parts, six of which belonged to the chief of good and of light, and six to the chief of evil and of darkness. This idea is figuratively expressed by a tree bearing twelve fruits which give the knowledge of good and evil, for thus it is painted in the gospel of Eve; also by the phrase twelve thousand years, six of which are called thousands of God, and six thousands of the Devil. These expressions are emblematic of the year, during which man passes successively under the conflicting empires of light and darkness, under

that of the long days and under that of the long nights, experiencing sometimes good, sometimes evil, which war or combine with each other, according as the Sun advances to or recedes from our hemisphere; according as he organizes sublunary matter by vegetation or abandons it to its principle of inertia, whence follows the disorganization of bodies, the disorder that winter causes in the elements and upon the surface of the earth until spring re-establishes universal harmony.

It is then that made fruitful by the action of ethereal fire, immortal and intelligent, and by the heat of the Sun of the equinoctial Lamb, the earth becomes a Paradise for man. But when the star of day attains the Balance, and the celestial Serpent, or signs of autumn, pass in the other hemisphere, then by his retreat the Sun delivers our region to the rigours of winter, to impetuous winds, and all the ravages that the malevolent spirit of darkness exercises in the world. Then nothing remains for man but hope in the return of the Sun to the signs of spring or to the Lamb, first of those signs. Behold the Saviour, he whom Christians now so ignorantly worship!

Let us see if the God of the Christians, he that John called the light which enlightens every man coming into the world, has the character of the Solar Deity, adored by all peoples, under a host of names, and with different attributes, and if Christian fable has the same foundation as all the other solar fables we have analysed. We have already said that two principal epochs of the solar movement have struck mankind. The first is that where the Sun, after having appeared to abandon us, retakes his route towards our region, and where the day in its infancy by successive growth approaches adolescence. The second is the equinox of spring, when that vigorous star diffuses through Nature a fruitful heat after having passed the famous passage, or equinoctial line which separates the empire of light from the empire of darkness, the heaven

of Ormusd from the hell of Ahriman. It is with these two epochs have been connected the principal fêtes of the adorers of that star which dispenses light and life to the world.

The Sun is not born, neither does it die, in reality; it is in itself at all times brilliant and majestic; but as regards the relation that the days it engenders have with the nights, there is in our world a progressive gradation of increase and decrease. That phenomenon originated many ingenious fictions, with which ancient theologians mystified the world. They have assimilated that generation, that periodic growth and diminution of the day, to the different states of man, who, after passing from infancy to maturity, degenerates and declines, until finally he arrives at the term of the career Nature has enabled him to run. The God of day, personified in the sacred allegories, was, then, submitted to a purely human destiny; he had his cradle and his tomb under a variety of names, as for example, Hercules, Bacchus, Osiris, and Christ. He the Redeemer God was an infant at the solstice of winter when the days begin to lengthen or increase; it is under that form his image was exposed in the ancient temples, there to receive homage of his adorers—"Because then," says Macrobius, "the day being the shortest, that God seems to be but a feeble infant. It is the child of the mysteries, that child whose image the Egyptians annually drew from their sanctuaries on an appointed day."

It is that child of whom the Egyptian Goddess declared herself the mother, in the famous inscription where we read these words: *The fruit that I have brought forth is the Sun.* It is that child, feeble and helpless, born in obscurity at the middle of the night, of which we are told by Plutarch a virgin Goddess was delivered at the solstice of winter.

That God had his mysteries and his altars, and statues represented him in the four ages of human life.

The Egyptians are not the only people who celebrated at the solstice of winter the birth of the Sun, of that star which remedies all the evils of Nature. The Romans fixed at that date their grand fête of the new Sun and the celebration of those solar sports known amongst us as games of the Circus. They fixed it at the eighth day before the kalends of January, or in other words, on the same day which answers to our twenty-fifth of December, or to the birth of the Sun, adored under the names of Mithra and Christ. We find evidence of this fact in a calendar printed in the Uranology of Father Pelau and at the end of our great work. There we read: "On the eighth before the kalends of January, *natalis invicti*, birth of the invincible." That invincible was Mithra or the Sun. "We celebrate," said Julian the philosopher, "some days before the first day of the year, magnificent sports, in honour of the Sun, to whom we give the title of invincible. May I long have the happiness of celebrating them, oh Sun, King of the Universe, thou that from all eternity the first God engendered," &c. That mode of expression is Platonic, for Plato called the Sun, the Son of God. The title of invincible, as appears from all the monuments of the Mithriac religion, was given to Mithra, or the Sun, the great divinity of the Persians.

Thus Mithra and Christ were born the same day, and that day was the birthday of the Sun. Mithra and the Sun were acknowledged to be the same, and of Christ it is said that he was the light which enlightened every man who came into the world. Mithra was born in a grotto, Bacchus and Jupiter in a cave, and Christ in a stable. That parallel was made by St. Justin himself. It was in a grotto we are told that Christ reposed when the Magi came to adore him. But who were the Magi? The adorers of Mithra or of the Sun. What presents did they carry to the new-born Deity? Three sorts of presents consecrated to the Sun by the worship of the Arabs, of the

Chaldeans, and of the other Orientals. By what are they informed of that birth? By astrology, their favourite science. What were their dogmas? They believed, said Chardin, in the eternity of the first being, which is *light*. What did they according to that fable? The first duty of their religion which commanded them to adore the *rising Sun*. What name did these Magi apply to Christ? That of East. The East, said they, is his name. It is *at* the East and not *in* the East that they saw his image. Moreover, the sphere of the Magi and the Chaldeans represented in the skies a new-born child called Christ and Jesus. He was placed in the arms of the celestial Virgin, or Virgin of the Signs. Eratosthenes speaks of her as Isis, mother of Horus. To what point of the heavens do that virgin of the spheres and her infant answer at the hour of midnight on the twenty-fifth of December, at the very instant when is born the God of the year, the new Sun, or Christ? To the eastern, to that point where the Sun rises on the first day.

It is a fact independent of all hypothesis, independent of all the inferences we may wish to draw therefrom, that on the 25th of December, precisely at the hour of midnight, in those countries where Christianity first appeared, the celestial sign which mounted upon the horizon, and of which the ascendant presided at the opening of the new solar revolution, was the Virgin of the constellations. It is a fact, that the God Sun, born at the solstice of winter, is reunited to it and envelops it with all his fires at the epoch of our fête of the Assumption or reunion of the mother and her son. It is also a fact that she passes out or from the solar rays at the very moment when we celebrate his appearance in the world, or nativity. We examine not what motive induced the fixing of these fêtes; it is sufficient for us to say here are three facts that no reasoning can destroy, and from which an attentive observer, who well knows the genius of ancient theologians, may

draw grand conclusions, unless he see in all this pure matter of chance—a view little likely to satisfy those who are on their guard against whatever tends to the debilitation of reason, and the perpetuation of prejudice. At least it is certain that the same virgin, she who alone was able allegorically to become a mother, without ceasing to be a Virgin, performs the three grand functions of the Virgin Mother of Christ. It is, above all, her function as mother we examine here. Men naturally think that those who personified the Sun, and made it pass through the various stages of human life—who supposed him the hero of marvellous adventures, chanted in poems or related in legends—would not fail to draw his horoscope, the custom then being to draw the horoscope of infants at the precise moment of their birth. That custom prevailed, above all, with the Chaldeans and the Magi. They celebrated that fête, under the name of *dies natalis*, or festival of the birth. But the celestial Virgin who presided at the birth of the personified God of Day was reputed to be his mother, and fulfil the prophecy of the astrologer who had said, “A Virgin will conceive and bring forth a Son;” that is to say, she will bring forth the Sun God. From thence the pictures traced on the sphere of the Magi, of which Abulmazar has given a description, and of which Kircher, Selden, Roger Bacon, Albert the Great, and many other learned authors have spoken. We find, says Abulmazar, in the first decan, or in the first ten degrees of the sign of the Virgin, according to the most ancient traditions of the Persians, of the Chaldeans, of the Egyptians, of Hermes, and of Esculapius, a young girl called in the Persian tongue *Seclenidos* of *Darzama*, a name translated into Arabic by that of *Adrenedefa*; that is to say, a Virgin, chaste, pure, immaculate, with long flowing hair, of noble figure, agreeable and expressive countenance. She holds in her hand two ears of corn; she is seated upon a throne; she is suckling and tending an infant, by some called Jesus, by others

Christ. The Persian Sphere, published by Scaliger at the end of his notes concerning Manilius, describes the celestial virgin in similar terms ; but it does not name the infant she is suckling.

In the National Library of France may be seen an Arabian manuscript, which contains an illuminated sketch of the twelve signs. That sketch represents also an infant by the side of the holy Virgin, who appears very like the Egyptian Isis. It is more than probable that the ancient astrologers would have placed in the skies the infantine image of the new-born Sun, in the constellation which presides at his second birth, and at that of the year at the solstice of winter, from which originated a variety of fictions about the God of Day conceived in the chaste womb of a Virgin, since that constellation was really the Virgin. This conclusion seems more natural than the conclusion of those who obstinately contend that there existed a woman who became Mother without ceasing to be Virgin, and that the fruit of her womb is that Eternal Being who moves and rules all Nature. Thus the Greeks said of their God, Ram, or Lamb, the famous Jupiter Ammon, that he was educated by Themis, which word Themis is another of the names given to the Virgin of the Constellations. She was also called Ceres, to which was added the epithet Holy Virgin, and she was the mother of young Bacchus, or the Sun in its infancy, whose personified image was, according to Macrobius, at the solstice of winter exposed in the Temples. That writer's testimony is confirmed by the author of the Chronicle of Alexandria, who expresses himself in these terms: "The Egyptians have, up to our time, consecrated the accouchement of a Virgin, who was delivered of a Son that was exposed in a cradle to the adoration of the people." King Ptolemy, having demanded the reason of that custom, was told it was a mystery taught to their fathers by distinguished prophets. We know that with the Egyptians, *prophet* meant *chief of initiation*.

It is said, though we know not on what authority, that the ancient Druids also rendered homage to a virgin with this inscription—*Virgini pariturae*, and that her statue was in the territory of Chartres. It is certain that in the monuments of Mithra, or the Sun, of which the worship was formerly established in Great Britain, might be seen a female suckling an infant personification of the God of Day. An English author, who published a Dissertation on that monument, details all the circumstances necessary to establish actual relations between festivals in honour of the birth of Christ and those in honour of the birth of Mithra. That author, more pious than philosophical, boldly assumes the unreality of those festivals, the imagination of which he ascribes to certain prophecies concerning the birth of Christ. He properly observes that the Mithriac worship was established throughout the Roman Empire, as well as in Gaul and in Great Britain. He cites, moreover, the testimony of Saint Jerome, who complains that the Pagans celebrated the fêtes or festivals of the rising Sun, on the same spot in Bethlehem where Christ was born. According to us the worship of Christ is but the worship of Mithra under a different name, as we have demonstrated in our analysis of the fable of Adonis and other solar personifications.

Having shown the astronomical basis on which rests belief in an incarnate Sun, born of a Virgin under the name of Christ, we proceed to examine the origin of that fable, according to which Christ died, then suffered resurrection, or was raised from the dead at the equinox of Spring, under the form of the Paschal Lamb.

The Sun, that glorious luminary, which alone can redeem us from the evils caused by winter, said in the ancient sacerdotal fictions concerning the Sun, to be born at the winter solstice, seems to remain three months in the inferior signs, in the regions affected to evil and darkness, there to be submitted to the power of their chief,

before achieving that equinox of spring the passing of which secures his triumph over darkness, and renews the face of nature. Having thus personified solar action, the priests gave life to their personification, describing it as a man exposed to all the infirmities of mortal life, until able to resume the rights of divinity, by triumphing over darkness. The genius of allegory composed a life of this Redeemer God, and imagined for him adventures agreeable to his character, and to the end proposed in the mystery of initiations. It is thus that Esop wishing to paint a moving picture of those strong and unjust men, who oppress the weak, has brought into play certain animals to whom he has given opposing characters, and ascribed an action, which though of course imaginary well expresses the purpose and moral of his apologue. Thus the Egyptians invented the fable about Osiris or of the beneficent Sun, who ran through Nature in order everywhere to scatter those innumerable benefits of which he is the source, and (in opposition to him) Typhon or personified principle of darkness, who thwarts at every turn the good principle, and ultimately consigns him to death. Upon that simple idea they built up the fable of Osiris and of Typhon, in which the former is historically presented to us as a legitimate king, and the other as the tyrant of Egypt. Besides, the wrecks of sacerdotal fictions conserved in the pages of Diodorus and Plutarch, we have a Life of Osiris and of Typhon, composed by Bishop Synesius—for in his time Bishops condescended to fabricate legends. In that fabulous Life the adventures, the characters and the portraits of the two principles of Egyptian theology were traced from imagination, but still in harmony with the idea of the part that each of them should play in order to express the action of principles eternally opposing and opposed. The Persians had also their history of Ormusd and of Ahrimanes, which history contained an animated recital of their combats and the

great victories achieved by God, or the good principle, over the Devil, or bad principle. The Greeks had a Life of Hercules and of Bacchus, which enclosed the history of their exploits, also the benefits they had spread over all the earth, and these recitals were very ingenious and learned poems. The history of Christ, on the contrary, is a tedious, wearying legend, marked by that dryness and sadness which characterize the legends of the Brahmins, where we read of nothing but penitents and devotees and holy men who live in contemplation. Their God Vishnou, incarnated in Chrishna, has much in common with Christ. We find certain tricks and doings of the little Chrishna, amazingly similar to those ascribed to Christ in the Gospel of the Infancy. Chrishna like Christ rose from the dead.

The Magi had also a legend concerning the chief of their religion. According to that legend, prodigies announced his birth. While an infant he was exposed to great dangers, and obliged to fly into Persia, as was Christ into Egypt. Like Christ he was pursued by a powerful enemy who sought to destroy him. By an angel Chrishna was transported to heaven, whence he brought the book of salvation. Like Christ he was tempted by the Devil, who endeavoured to seduce him by all sorts of magnificent promises. Chrishna was calumniated and persecuted by the Priests, as was Christ by the Pharisees. To prove the dogmas of his book and confirm the divinity of his mission he worked stupendous miracles. The reader will perceive from this parallel that the authors of the legend of Christ, who pretend that the Magi went to his cradle, conducted by the famous star, whose appearance it was said Zoroaster, the chief of their religion, had predicted, would not have failed to introduce in their legend many traits which belong to the Saviour in that Persian religion, of which Christianity is but a branch, and with which it exhibits the most complete conformity, as we shall have

occasion clearly to prove when speaking of the Mithriac religion, or of the Sun Mithra, the grand Divinity of the Persians.

The authors of Christianity had not sufficient either of instruction or genius to write poems such as those sung by the ancients in honour of Hercules, of Theseus, of Jason, of Bacchus, and others. Besides, the thread of astronomical knowledge was lost; and those who composed our holy legend had no better material than the wrecks of ancient fictions no longer comprehended. Add to all this that the end of those who acted as chiefs of initiation to the mysteries of Christ was an end purely moral, and that they desired less to paint heroic vanquishers of giants or other natural evils than a patient, benevolent, Godlike man, come upon the earth to preach, and to manifest by his example the virtues of which the practice was taught to the initiated in his mysteries, which were those of life and light eternal. In that sense he was made to act, to preach, and to command the austere practices of the Essenes—a sect the same in all important particulars as the Brahmins and devotees of India. He had his disciples, as had Sommona Kodon, of the Siamese—a God born of a Virgin through the action of the Sun; and the number of his Apostles suggests that grand duodecimal division which characterizes all religions of which the Sun is the hero. But his legend was more marvellous than amusing, and by no means charmed or satisfied even ignorant and credulous Jews. As the author of this sacred tale pretended that its hero was born among the Hebrews, he submits him and his mother to the religious practices of those people. He was, like every other Jewish child, circumcised on the eighth day; like every other Jewish woman, his mother was obliged to present herself at the Temple with a view to purification. The enlightened will feel all that to follow naturally from the first idea, or from

that which pictures the Son of God as born of a Virgin, to preach, to die, and to rise from the dead. Clearly resurrection is impossible where there is no death. From the moment of personifying or HUMANIZING the Sun, his worshippers made him pass by degrees from infancy to maturity; and so early was his acquisition of knowledge that at the age of twelve he astonished all the doctors. The moral they desired to inculcate was conveyed by precept in his discourses, or by example in his actions. They ascribed to him miraculous powers, and found fanatics ready to proclaim themselves eyewitnesses of their exercise. Miracles are never wanting where the minds of men are disposed to believe in them. People saw, or thought they saw, many miracles at the tomb of the blessed Paris, in this enlightened age, in the midst of an immense population, made up in part of sensible critics, but in much larger part of enthusiasts and knaves. All chiefs of religion are said to have worked miracles. Forty thousand disciples everywhere declared that they had witnessed the miracles of their Man-God Fo. Odin worked miracles for the conversion or edification of Scandinavians; he raised the dead; he descended into hell; and he benevolently employed himself in the baptism of infants. The marvellous is the grand resource of sacerdotal imposture; nothing is so strongly believed as that which is incredible. Bishop Synesius said miracles were cheap for a people at any price, as without miracles they could not be kept religiously in order. The entire life of Christ has been composed in that spirit. Its fabricators have connected fictitious events, not only with known places, as did the ancient poets in their fables concerning Hercules, Bacchus, Osiris, and other solar personifications; but also to known names and a known epoch, such as the age of Augustus, of Tiberius, of Pontius Pilate, &c.; which proves not the real existence of Christ, but merely that the

sacerdotal fiction was invented after that epoch. History acquaints us with about fifty evangelists or lives of Christ, and so many were the tales told concerning him, that immense volumes could not contain them, according to the expression of one of the authors of the legend. The genius of Christian mysticism opened for itself a vast career; but all are agreed upon two fundamental points, namely, the incarnation, which we have already explained, and the death and resurrection, that we will proceed to show has reference to the Sun, and is really nothing more than the repetition of a tragical adventure shadowed forth in all the ancient mysteries, and described in all the songs and all the legends of the Sun-worshippers, who practised their religions under a variety of names.

Let us here recal what we have proved in a former part of this work—the important fact, that, whether in his birth or in his incarnation in the womb of a virgin, Christ has all the characteristics of the God-Sun; that the birth of “our Saviour” is said to have happened at the precise moment when the ancients celebrated the birth of the Sun and of Mithra; and that it happened under the ascendant of the constellation which in the sphere of the Magi carries an infant called Jesus. We now propose to prove that this infant deity has, moreover, all the characteristics of the Sun-God in his resurrection; as well with regard to the time when that event is said to have happened as with regard to the form under which Christ displayed himself in his triumph.

In terminating our explanation of the pretended fall of man, and of the fable according to which a serpent introduced evil into the world, we declared that that evil was of a nature to be remedied by the Sun of Spring, and only by him. The remedy or reparation operated by Christ ought, then, to manifest itself at that period.

Now it is precisely at the equinox of spring that Christ triumphs, and that he redeems the human kind in the

Christian history called Life of Christ. It is precisely with that annual epoch are connected those festivals which have for their object the celebration of that great event; for the Easter of the Christians, as that of the Jews, is necessarily fixed at the full moon of the equinox of spring; that is to say, at the precise moment of the year when the Sun achieves the famous passage which separates the empire of the God of Light from that of the Prince of Darkness; and when reappears in our climates the glorious star which gives light and life to all Nature. The Jews and the Christians call it the Passover; for it is then that the God-Sun, or the Lord of Nature, passes toward us, to distribute those benefits of which the serpent of darkness and of autumn had deprived us during the winter. Behold there the fine Apollo, full of all the forces of youth, who triumphs over the serpent Python. It is the festival of the Lord, since to the Sun was given that respectable title. Adonis was the name of that star in the Eastern fable concerning Adonis, the solar deity, who, like Christ, went out victorious from the tomb. In the consecration of the seven days to the seven planets, the day of the Sun, or Sunday, is called the Lord's day, or day of the Lord. It precedes Monday, or day of the Moon, and follows Saturday, or the day of Saturn—two planets which occupy the extremes of the musical scale, of which the Sun is the centre, and forms also the fourth. Thus the term Lord is applicable to the Sun under all solar relations.

The fete or festival of the passage, or passover, was originally fixed at the twenty-fifth of March; that is to say, exactly three months after the festival of the birth, which is also the birth of the Sun. It was then that that star, retaking its creative force and all its fruitful activity, appeared to establish a new order of things, to create, so to speak, a new universe, from the wreck of the ancient world, and to make, by means of the equinoctial Lamb,

the human race pass from darkness and misery into light and happiness.

All these mystical ideas are developed by Cedrenus:—“The first day of the first month,” says that historian, “is first of the month Nisan, which answers to the twenty-fifth of March of the Romans, and to the month Phamenot of the Egyptians. On that day Gabriel saluted Mary, in order to make her conceive the Saviour. It was on the same day that, according to the theology of Egypt, Osiris fecundated the Moon. It was on the same day that our Saviour God, after having terminated his career, rose from the dead—a feat commemorated by our fathers, who called it the passover or passage of the Lord. It was on the same day that our ancient theologians fixed, also, his return or *second coming*.”

The same Cedrenus makes Christ die on the twenty-third of March, and suffer resurrection on the twenty-fifth. “From thence,” says he, “came the usage in the church of celebrating Easter on the twenty-fifth of March.”

Ancient usage being to PERSONIFY solar appearances and solar action, in sacred legends, people mourned the Sun for some days as dead, and on the twenty-fifth of March rejoiced at his resurrection. It is Macrobius who tells us this; the same Macrobius from whom we learn that, at the solstice of winter, the ancient priests described that same Solar Deity under the form of a new-born child, and at the spring as a young man, strong, beautiful and vigorous. Macrobius adds, that these celebrations of the passion or of the death and of the resurrection of the God of Day, fixed at the equinox of spring, were recognised by all the sectaries of the religion of the Sun. With the Egyptians, it was the death and the resurrection of Osiris; with the Phenicians, it was the death and the resurrection of Adonis; with the Phrygians, the tragical adventures of Atys. In all religions the God-Sun, like Christ, suffered,

and like him triumphed over death; and that, too, at precisely the same epoch of the Sun's apparent annual revolution. It is for parties who contend that Christ was something else than a mere personification of the Sun to explain these singular coincidences. We, who cannot ascribe them to mere chance, frankly declare our belief that the passion and the resurrection of Christ, celebrated at Easter, make part of the ancient religion of the Sun, or of the worship of universal Nature.

It is, above all, in the religion of Mithra, or the Solar Deity adored under that name by the Magi, we find the most striking resemblance to the death and the resurrection of Christ, and to the mysteries of the Christians. Mithra, born also on the twenty-fifth December, as Christ, like him died, and had his sepulchre, upon which flowed the tears of his disciples. The priests during the night carried his image to a tomb prepared for its reception, where, like the Phenician Adonis, it was stretched upon a litter. That pomp was rendered lugubrious by the funeral chants and the groanings of the priests, who devoted some time to the expression of a simulated grief. They lighted the sacred torch, and after anointing or covering with perfumes the image, one of them gravely pronounced these words: "Take comfort, sacred flock of the initiated. Your God is resuscitated; his pains and sufferings will obtain your salvation." "Wherefore," asks the Christian writer from whom we obtain these details, "wherefore exhort these unfortunates to rejoice? Wherefore deceive them by false promises? The death of your God is known; his new life is not proved. It is an idol that you bury—it is an idol that you draw from the tomb. I demand," continues Firmicus, "to be informed who has seen your God with horns like an ox, on account of whose death you are so terribly afflicted?" And we, in our turn, ask to be informed by credulous Christians, such as Firmicus, who afflict themselves about the death of the Lamb-God,

slaughtered that with his blood may be washed out the sins of the world, who has seen their God in the form of a Lamb, whose death and resurrection they so triumphantly celebrate?

Are they ignorant that two thousand years before the Christian era—epoch to which we may trace back the religion of the Persians and the worship Mithraic of the Bull of Mithra—the Sun achieved the equinoctial passage under the sign of the Bull; and that it is in consequence of the effect of the precession of the equinoxes that in our day he achieves it under the sign of the Lamb? that nothing has changed but celestial form and the name, the worship being absolutely the same? It seems also that Firmicus, in attacking the ancient religions, endeavoured to harmonise all those traits of resemblance that their mysteries had in common with those of the Christians. He attaches himself more particularly to the initiation Mithraic, which he successfully parallels with the initiation Christian. It is true he explains the wonderful conformity of these two religions by saying, after Tertullian and Saint Justin, that long before the existence of Christians the Devil employed himself, very much to his own satisfaction, in causing his adorers to copy their, the *future* Christians' *future* mysteries and ceremonies. Excellent reasons for Christians, such as many of those who *now* claim the title, but a pitiable offering indeed to men of good sense. For ourselves, who believe not in the Devil, and, of course, are not, like them, in his secrets, we declare that the religion of Christ being, like every other religion, founded on Sun-worship, has conserved the same dogmas, the same practices, the same mysteries (in form only more or less modified)—that all has been common, because the God was so; that the accessories only have been different, the base being absolutely the same. The most ancient apologists of Christianity allowed that the Mithraic religion

had its sacraments, its baptism, its penitence, its eucharist, and consecration by virtue of certain mystical words ; that the novitiates of that religion were put to severer, far more rigorous, tests than the novitiates of Christianity ; that the initiated or faithful made on their foreheads a sacred sign ; that they admitted also the dogma of the resurrection ; that they had their virgins and the law of continence ; finally, that with them prevailed all those customs since adopted by Christians. It is true that Tertullian again calls the Devil to his aid ; finding it difficult, without such assistance, to explain a resemblance so striking. But as, without the intervention of the Devil, it is easy to perceive that when two religions resemble each other so perfectly, the more ancient is the mother and the more youthful is the daughter, we conclude, since the worship of Mithra is infinitely more ancient than that of Christ, and his ceremonies date back to a period long anterior to those of the Christians, that the Christians are incontestably either the sectaries or copyists of the religion of the Magi.

I will add, with the learned Hyde, that the Persians held a theory with regard to angels more complete than that of the Jews and of the Christians ; that they admitted the distinction between angels—some being angels of light, some angels of darkness ; that they were acquainted with the recital of their combats, and also with the names of angels who have passed into our religion ; that they baptised their children and on them imposed a name ; that they had the fiction concerning Paradise and Hell, to be found equally with the Greeks, the Romans, and many other peoples ; that they had a sacerdotal order and all the constitution ecclesiastic of the Christians, which, according to Hyde, existed among them more than three thousand years ago. But I will not say with him, that we should see in that resemblance the work of Providence, which has wished that the Persians

might, by anticipation, and in spirit prophetic, do those things and think those thoughts afterwards to be done and thought by Christians. If Hyde, born in an island where superstition is found almost constantly side by side with philosophy, and forms with it a monstrous alliance, has not been moved by the fear of offending the prejudices of his age to thus disguise the opinion which a resemblance so striking should beget in him, we are bound to say that knowledge is not always good sense, and by no means of equal value. I will allow, then, with Hyde, that the two religions resemble each other in almost every point; but I must conclude that they are, in reality, one, or, at least, that they are nothing else than two sects of the ancient religion of the Orientals, adorers of the Sun, and that their institutions, as well as their principal dogmas, have a common origin. It is still the Sun which is the God of that religion, whether he be called Christ, Mithra, Osiris, Adonis, Bacchus, Atys, or any other sacerdotal name. Let us pass now to an examination of the forms which characterise the God-Sun of the Christians in his triumph.

That celestial sign under which passed the sun at the moment when he, as it were, commences to lead back the long days of summer to our hemisphere; when Christianity was known to the West, and more than fifteen centuries before; was the Ram, that the Persians, in their cosmogony called the Lamb, as before shown. It was the sign of the exaltation of the Sun in the system of the astrologers, and there ancient Sabeism had fixed its most important commemorative festival. It was then the return of the Sun to the celestial Lamb, which every year regenerated nature. Behold the form assumed in its triumph by that majestic star—that benevolent God, Saviour of Men! Behold *the Lamb who takes upon himself the sins of the world!*

In the same way that Ahrimanes, or the Prince of

Darkness, borrowed the forms of the constellation which, in autumn, presides over the long nights of winter, his vanquisher, the God of Light, assumes in spring those forms of the celestial sign under which he triumphs. It is a consequence flowing naturally from the principles we have adopted in our explanation of the fable regarding the introduction of evil by the serpent. We know, besides, that the genius of the adorers of the Sun inclined them to picture that star under the forms and with the attributes of those celestial signs with which each successive month it united itself; hence the many metamorphoses of Jupiter with the Greeks, and of Vichnou with the Indians. Thus they pictured a young man conducting a ram, or carrying a ram upon his shoulder, or arming his forehead with the horns of that animal. It is under this last form the celebrated Jupiter Ammon manifests himself. Christ also took the name and form of Lamb; and that animal is the symbolic expression by which he is designated. People say not the Sun of the Lamb, but simply the Lamb. Neither did they say the Sun of the Lion or of Hercules, but simply the Lion. These are but different expressions of the same idea, and a varied expression of the same celestial animal in symbolic pictures of the Sun of Spring.

That term Lamb, applied with so much emphasis to Christ, or the God of Light in his equinoctial triumph, may be found oft repeated in the sacred books of the Christians, but, above all, in their book of initiation known as the Apocalypse. The faithful or initiated are there qualified to become disciples of the Lamb. In that book we find a representation of the Lamb slaughtered in the midst of four animals, which are also in the constellations, and which are placed at the four cardinal points of the sphere. It is before the Lamb that the genii of the twenty-four hours, emblematically designated as old men, prostrate themselves. It is, we are told, the slaughtered Lamb who is worthy to receive all power, divinity,

wisdom, force, honour, glory, and blessedness. It is the Lamb who opens the book of fatality, designated under the emblem of a book closed with seven seals.

All the nations of the earth come to place themselves before the throne and before the Lamb. They are arrayed in white; they have branches of palm in their hands, and sing with a loud voice, "Glory to God, who is seated on the throne." The celestial Lamb, or Ram, it should be remembered, is the sign of the exaltation of the Sun-God, which victorious star seems to be carried upward in its triumph. It would be superfluous to multiply here the passages in which this mystical word Lamb is repeated. Everywhere we meet with the God of Light under the name of Lamb; it was, in short, the grand divinity, to which the faithful consecrated themselves in the initiation of the Christians. The mysteries of Christ are, then, simply the mysteries of the God-Sun in his equinoctial triumph, where he assumes the forms of the first sign, or those of the celestial Lamb. Formerly a figure of the Lamb was the character or seal with which were marked the initiated of the Christian sect. An image symbolic of the Lamb was hung round the neck of their children. All the world knows the famous *Agnus Dei*.

The most ancient representation of the God of the Christians was the figure of a Lamb, sometimes attached to a vase reddened with his blood, sometimes lying down at the foot of a cross. That symbol subsisted as late as the year 620. The sixth synod of Constantinople ordained that instead of the ancient symbol, which was the Lamb, should be represented a man fastened upon a cross; which ordination was confirmed by the first Pope Adrian. At this day the Lamb plays a conspicuous part in the hands of our priests. It is represented couchant, partly upon a cross, partly upon the book of fatality, which is closed with seven seals. The number seven is that of the seven spheres, of which the Sun is the soul,

and of which the movement or revolution calculates from the point of Aries, or Lamb equinoctial.

All ancient adorers of the Sun celebrated the victory obtained by the Lamb over the Prince of Darkness. The priests arrayed themselves in white—a colour affected to Ormusd, or God of Light; they consecrated the elements; in the temples, as in Nature, all was renewed. It is thus that the Persians, in their festival commemorative of the entrance of spring into the constellation Aries, or Lamb, chanted the renewal of all things, and the new day of the new month of the new year of the new time, which renews whatever is born of time. They had also, a few days before, their Festival of the Cross, which some days after was followed by that of victory.

It was at the same epoch that their ancient Perseus was reputed to have drawn from the sky and consecrated the fire eternal—that fire conserved by the Vestals in Rome, and which every year at the spring the priests drew flame with which they illumined their temples. The same ceremony was practised in Egypt. From an ancient monument of the religion of the Egyptians, it appears that their custom was to form three piles of wood of ten pieces each, a number equal to that of the decans or the divisions of the signs of ten degrees in ten degrees. Thus there are thirty pieces of wood, or as many as we count of degrees to the sign. Upon each of these three piles is lying a Lamb or Ram, while above is an immense image of the Sun, with rays prolonged as far as to the earth. The priests touch with the end of the finger these rays, and from them draw the sacred fire, with which to light the funeral pile of the Lamb, and destroy the universe. In the celebration of that fête all was red or the colour of fire, as in the great commemorative Festival of the Jews; that is to say, their Festival of the Lamb. That resurrection of the fire, sacred and eternal, whose source is the Sun, and which at the spring renders life to nature

in our hemisphere, was the true resurrection of the Sun Christ. Every year the Bishop of Jerusalem shuts himself up in a little cave called the tomb of Christ; provided with a stock of little wax candles, by the action of flint against steel he manages to produce an explosion of light, such as that sometimes to be seen emanating from the fires of the Opera, in order to make the fanatical multitude believe that sacred fire is fallen from the sky upon the earth. Then the bishop goes out from the cavern, crying with a loud voice, "Fire from heaven is descended, and the holy candle is illuminated!" The credulous people run in crowds to buy these holy candles; for the people are everywhere the dupes of the priest.

The name of Lamb was given to Christ, and he was formerly, as now, represented under that emblem, because that Christ is the Sun, and that the triumph of the Sun happens every year under the celestial sign of the Lamb, or under the sign which was then the first of the twelve, and in which the equinox of spring had place. The Trojans annually offered, as a victim to the Sun, the *white Lamb*, and their country was celebrated by the mysteries of Atys, in which the equinoctial Lamb played a grand part.

In the same way that Christians supposed their God-Sun Christ to have been attached to the wood of a cross, the Phrygians, adorers of the Sun, under the name of Atys, represented him in his passion as a young man tied to a tree. At the foot of that tree was a Lamb, or the equinoctial Ram of Spring.

These mysteries of Atys lasted three days. They were days of mourning which followed immediately certain days of joy, during which were celebrated, as already said, the happy epoch when the Sun Atys resumed his empire over the long nights.

That fête fell on the twenty-fifth of March, or the eighth day before the kalends of April, which happens to be the

very day on which, originally, Easter and the triumph of Christ were celebrated. Between these two fêtes there is no difference except in the name of the hero of the tragedy, who, throughout both fables, is absolutely the same God. In Phrygia also it was that people composed the famous book of initiation to the mysteries of the Lamb, we call Apocalypse. The Emperor Julian examines the reasons which led them to place that solemnity at the equinox of spring, and tells us it is because Deity then passes the line which separates him from our climates, and comes to prolong in our hemisphere the duration of the days—that which happens, adds he, when the Sun passes under the Ram or under the Lamb. At his approach we celebrate in our mysteries the presence of the God-Saviour and Liberator.

The Ram, or the Lamb, does not with the Christians play a part so important only because it is the very same part as was formerly played by the Bull in the mysteries of Bacchus and of Mithra. Osiris and Bacchus, both represented under the forms of the ancient equinoctial Bull, died, and rose from death, as Christ. In ancient Egyptian temples the mysteries of their passion were symbolised precisely as those of Atys and Christ with the Phrygians and with the Christians.

The fathers of the church, and the writers of the Christian sect, often speak of these fêtes celebrated in honour of Osiris, and parallel them with the adventures of Christ. Augustin, Theophilus, Athanasius, Minutius Felix, Lactantius, Firmicus, as well as more ancient authors who have spoken of Osiris, or the God-Sun adored under that name in Egypt, agree in describing the universal mourning of the Egyptians, during that festival where they commemorate the death of Osiris, as we on Good Friday commemorate that of Christ. They described the ceremonies practised at his tomb, the tears there shed during many days, and then the fêtes of

joy which succeeded to that sadness at the moment of his resurrection. He descended into Hell; then he returns to unite himself with Osiris, God of Spring, and to triumph over the Prince of Darkness—Typhon, his enemy, by whom he had been put to death. Those mysteries in which the initiated were gratified with the spectacle of his passion were called mysteries of the night. According to Macrobius, the ceremonies had the same object as those of the worship of Atys, and related to the Sun, vanquisher of darkness, symbolised by the serpent, of which Typhon, in autumn, assumed the forms.

The same mode of explanation may be applied to Bacchus, who, from the confession of all the ancients, was the same as Osiris—that is, the God-Sun, of which the infantine image was presented to his worshippers at the solstice of winter. Bacchus, after being put to death, descended into hell, and suffered resurrection. Every year were celebrated the mysteries of his passion. Those fêtes were called fêtes Titanic and *festivals of perfect night*. Of that God it was fabled that he was cut in pieces by giants; but Ceres, his mother, having collected and reunited his members, he again became young and vigorous. In order to commemorate his passion, they put to death a Bull, of which they tore the flesh, because Bacchus, or the God-Sun, had been thus torn by the Titans. It was not the representation of the slaughtered Lamb, but of the slaughtered Bull, that was given in the mysteries. In Mingrelia it is a cooked Lamb that the prince tears in pieces with his hands, and that he distributes among his courtiers, at the Festival of Easter.

Julius Firmicus, who relates an ancient legend concerning the life and death of Bacchus, for whose real existence as a man he contends no less earnestly than for the real existence as both God and man of Christ, admits that Pagans explain these fictions by Nature, and that they regard such recitals as merely solar fables. It is also true that he

denies the validity of their reasonings, as so many people deny the validity of our explanations ; whether from ignorance, or an envious desire to calumniate that which they understand not, as the fathers of the church in their critical contest with Paganism so palpably displayed. Firmicus even takes upon himself a defence of the Sun, which he considered scandalised and outraged by these fictions, imagines for it a discourse in which the indignant God of Day complains of being sometimes submerged in the Nile under the names of Osiris and of Orus ; sometimes mutilated under those of Atys and of Adonis ; sometimes baked in an oven or roasted at the spit like Bacchus. Firmicus might have added sometimes nailed or hung upon a cross, like Christ. Clear it is the tradition that all these tragical and incredible adventures were fictions respecting the Sun, of an eminently mystical character, was conserved by Pagans of every age and nation. It is this we propose to prove by our explanation of the fable of Christ, put to death and resuscitated at the equinox of spring.

To Bacchus, as to Christ, was applied the term Saviour ; also to Jupiter, or the God represented with horns like a ram, who had his statue in the temple of the Virgin at Athens.

As for the rest, the idea of a God descended upon the earth for the salvation of men is neither new nor peculiar to Christians. The ancients thought that the Supreme God had set, at various epochs, his sons or his grandsons to employ themselves for the happiness of human creatures. In that number may be placed Hercules and Bacchus, that is to say, the God-Sun, glorified under a great variety of names.

Bacchus worked miracles, cured the sick and predicted events, just as Christ did. While an infant he was menaced with death, precisely as Christ was menaced with death by Herod. The miracle of the three pitchers, which

in his temple constantly supplied a wine which, though freely partaken of, never diminished in quantity, will bear comparison with the miraculous turning of water into wine by Christ. On the sixth of January was established a feast commemorative of that miracle of the hero of the Christian religion; it was on the ninth of the same month that a like miracle was worked in the temple of Bacchus. It appears that the author of the Christian legend has collected different marvellous fictions, which, under many names, were received as gospel by adorers of the Sun. Bacchus, like Christ, was called God, Son of God; Bacchus, like Christ, established mysteries, in which the famous serpent, who plays so distinguished a part in the fable of the Lamb, is associated with certain mystical apples which grew in the garden of the Hesperides. These mysteries or initiations were pledges of virtue. The initiated also looked for the second coming of their Man-God. They hoped he would one day resume the government of the universe, and renew for man his first felicity. They were often persecuted, as were the adorers of Christ. Many crimes were imputed to them for celebrating these mysteries, just as many crimes were imputed to the first Christians, and, in general, to all who celebrated mysteries of a novel and secret character. In certain legends Bacchus was reputed to be the son of Ceres, the celestial virgin. In other legends more ancient it was the daughter of Ceres, or Proserpine, who conceived him through the power of the Holy Ghost, or the Supreme God, in the form of a serpent. That serpent is the famous serpent of Esculapius, which is like the brazen one of Moses raised in the wilderness. Bacchus is represented with the horns of a Bull, because that, in point of fact, every time the Sun unites itself with the serpent of autumn, the Bull of spring becomes clearly manifest. In after ages it assumed the forms of the Lamb; and it is then that Ceres, or the celestial virgin,

becomes his mother, in the sense that she presides at his birth. For we have already seen that the ancients represented it under the emblems of a new-born child, at the solstice of winter, in order to express the infantine condition of the God-Sun, adored under the name of Bacchus, in Greece, in Thrace, in Asia Minor, in India, and in Arabia; under that of Osiris, in Egypt; of Mithra, in Persia; and of Adonis, in Phenicia; for Adonis is the same as Osiris and as Bacchus, according to the confession of ancient authors. But under that name, his legend is different from those of Osiris and of Bacchus. It is not the history of a conqueror nor a king; it is that of a young man of rare beauty, such as are all ancient descriptions of the sun at the epoch of spring. The Goddess who presides at the generation of beings becomes desperately enamoured of him. He is torn from her by death; an enormous wild boar, at the hunting season, wounding him in the source of fecundity. The unfortunate lover of Venus dies; he descends into hell. The Goddess of those regions where thick darkness prevails retains him near her during six months; but at the end of that time he is rendered back to life and to his lover, whom he enjoys also for six months. The same sadness and the same joy every year renew themselves and succeed each other. All authors who have spoken of that sacred fable agree as to Adonis being the Sun; in his death; in his banishment from our climates; in his descent to hell; in his return to light; in his passage to the superior hemisphere, where he remains equally six months, whilst that the earth is laughing and decked with all the graces bestowed upon it by the Goddess who presides over the generation of beings.

It is thus that Macrobius has understood that fable, and his explication would be complete if verified by the astronomical positions and formula furnished by us in the article upon Adonis and Venus, to be found in our great work. Macrobius clearly perceived that the fiction had

for its object the Sun in his passage through the zodiac, compared with the state of the earth in the two grand epochs of the movement of that star, whether it approach or recede from our climates. That annual phenomenon was the subject of joy and sadness which succeeded each other, and of religious ceremonies, in which the death of Adonis the God-Sun was deplored ; afterwards there were rejoicings at his return to life or resurrection. Adorers prepared for this God a superb bed by the side of the Goddess of generation and of spring, of the mother of the Loves and of the Graces. They made offering at his shrine of flowers, of essences ; in short of those first fruits that the Sun annually warms into life. They invited him to render himself to the wishes of mortals ; but before chanting his return to life, they celebrated doleful fêtes in honour of his sufferings and his death. He had his initiated, who wept at his tomb, and who shared with Venus alike her grief and joy. The fête or festival commemorative of return to life was, according to Corsini, fixed at the 25th of March.

At Alexandria the custom was to celebrate with great pomp the funerals of Adonis, of whom his adorers solemnly carried the image to a tomb. They were also celebrated at Athens. Plutarch, in his Life of Alcibiades and of Nicias, says it was at the moment of the death of Adonis that the Athenian fleet prepared for its unfortunate expedition to Sicily ; that nothing was then to be seen in the streets but images of dead Adonis carried in procession to the tomb by a crowd of women, who wept, struck their breasts, tore their hair, affecting in all their actions the sad pomp of interments. From that circumstance, according to Plutarch, were drawn sinister prognostics, that the event too fully realised. The women of Argos—for everywhere are women the strong support of superstition—went, like Martha and Mary, to deplore the death of Adonis, and that lugubrious ceremony took place in a chapel of the

God-Saviour, or the God-Lamb, or Ram, Jupiter, invoked under the name of Saviour.

Procopius and St. Cyril also speak of these festivals in honour of the death of Adonis, and the fêtes of joy by which they were succeeded at the time of his resurrection. Worshippers of Adonis showed the wound he had received from a wild boar, as worshippers of Christ shew the wound *he* received from a fanatical Jew. It was with the aid of fictions such as these, and the pompous ceremonial by which the unfortunate adventure of Adonis was celebrated, that people were persuaded of its reality. For people accustom themselves to believe as true facts purely supposititious adventures, when a multitude of recitals and of monuments seem to attest their existence. But, notwithstanding these sacred legends, notwithstanding the prestige of the ceremonies which tended to a belief that Adonis had actually existed, as our Christian doctors say actually did the Sun-Christ, the Pagans (if so we may be permitted to call them) have always seen in Adonis the personified Sun, and referred to the phenomena annually manifested by that star all the marvellous adventures of the lover of Venus, dead and risen from the dead. The hymns of Orpheus and of Theocritus upon Adonis indicate with sufficient clearness that their hero is but a personification of solar appearances and solar action. These poets invite him to come with the new year, in order to spread joy throughout nature. It was to the hours and to the seasons that was confided the care of leading him back to the twelve months. Orpheus called Adonis the God with the thousand names, the nourisher of nature, the God of whom the light is extinguished and rekindled by the revolution of time, and which sometimes sinks towards Tartarus, and sometimes remounts towards Olympus, in order to diffuse that heat which is the source of life and vegetation. The Sun, under the name of Horus, son of the virgin Isis, endured similar misfortunes. He

was persecuted by the black Typhon, who took the forms of the serpent. That terrible fiend had him cut in pieces as Bacchus, but then he was recalled to life by his mother, who gave him immortality. It is in Christian writers and with the Fathers of the Church that we find the principal features of this sacred romance. They describe for us the grief of Isis at the death of her son, and the fêtes she instituted on that occasion—fêtes at first lugubrious, and which are very soon changed into fêtes of mirth and gladness, when her son Orus is resuscitated. But Orus, from the confession of all the ancients, is the same as Apollo, and Apollo is the God-Sun; from whence it follows that the sad fêtes, to which succeeded fêtes of joy, in honour of Horus, dead and resuscitated, had also the Sun for their object. It was then a fundamental point of the religion of the Sun to ascribe to it death and resurrection, and to commemorate that double event by religious ceremonies. Hence the practice of everywhere raising tombs to the divinity of the Sun, under various names. Hercules had his tomb at Cadiz, where his bones were shown; Jupiter had his in Crete; Bacchus had his also; Osiris had a crowd of them in Egypt. That of Apollo was shown at Delphi, where he had been laid after the serpent Python put him to death. Three women shed tears upon his tomb, just as three women wept at the tomb of Christ. Afterwards Apollo triumphed over his enemy, the redoubtable Python, and that victory was annually celebrated at spring by solemn sports. It was at the equinox of spring that the Hyperboreans, of whom Apollo was the grand divinity, made the return of the Sun to the sign of the Lamb. Apollo took also the title of Saviour. At Athens and at Sparta were celebrated in his honour fêtes of joy at the full moon of spring; that is to say, the epoch at which the festival of the Lamb, or the Passover, is fixed with the Jews and with the Christians.

It was towards the commencement of the spring that

many northern nations sacrificed to the Sun. The most solemn festival of the Tartars is the *Joun*, or festival of spring. That of the Kalmucks falls at the full moon of April. They call it first equinoctial day, and that fête, the *white day*. In all the isles of Greece were celebrated fêtes in honour of the amiable God of spring, the vanquisher of winter and of the serpent Python; which fêtes were called fêtes of felicitation,

It would be useless further to multiply examples of like fêtes of joy, celebrated in every part of our hemisphere, in memory of the passage of the Sun towards our regions, and in gratitude for the manifold blessings diffused by his presence.

We have sufficiently proved that almost everywhere these joyous festivities were preceded by some days of mourning, during which the death of the personified Sun was mourned, before celebrating his return to us, or what we allegorically call his resurrection and triumph over the Prince of Darkness and the Genius of Winter. The Phrygians called these festivals festivals of the awaking Sun, which they feigned to sleep during the six months of autumn and of winter. All these mystical fictions, as we have seen, had no other object than that of commemorating the victories, alternate and successive, gained by the night over the day, and by the day over the night, together with that succession of activity and of repose of the earth while submitted to solar influence. These annual phenomena were described in the allegorical style, under the tragic forms of death, of crucifixion, &c., followed always by resurrection. The fable of a Christ, born as the Sun at the solstice of winter, and triumphing at the equinox of spring, under the forms of the equinoctial Lamb, has then all the important features and essential characteristics of those ancient solar fables with which we have compared it. The commemorative festivals of the religion of Christ are, as all those of the various solar religions, con-

nected essentially with the principal epochs of the annual movement of the star of day. From whence we conclude that, if Christ was a man, he was a man who strikingly resembled the personified Sun ; that his mysteries have all the characteristics of those of the adorers of the Sun ; or rather, to speak unequivocally, that the Christian religion, whether in its legend or in its mysteries, has for unique and sole object the worship of light eternal, rendered sensible to man by the Sun.

We are not the only nor the first person who has appreciated this idea concerning the religion of the Christians. Tertullian, their apologist, agrees that at the time when Christianity passed to the West, enlightened persons who examined it were of opinion, it was nothing more than a parody of the Mithraic religion, and that the God of the Christians, like the God of the Persians, was the Sun. They remarked among Christians many practices which plainly indicated the truth ; as, for example, their practice of praying with their faces turned towards the East, or towards that part of the world where the Sun rises. All their temples or all the places where they assembled for religious purposes were in ancient times turned towards the rising Sun. Their weekly fête day answered to the day of the Sun, called Sunday, or day of the *Lord Sun*. The ancient Franks called Sunday the day of the Sun. All these practices resulted necessarily from the very nature of their religion.

The Manicheans, whose religion was composed in part of Christianity and in part of the religion of the Magi, always while praying turned themselves towards the Sun. Zoroaster confirmed this practice by a well remembered precept. Moreover the Manicheans, who had not entirely lost the thread of the religious opinions of the ancient Persians with regard to the two principles and the Sun Mithra, of which Christ is a copy, said that Christ was the Sun, or that Christ had his residence in the Sun. That fact is attested by Theodoret, St. Cyril and St. Leon. It

was precisely because they held this opinion that the other Christians, who declared themselves the best believers, without doubt because they were the most ignorant, refused Manicheans admission to their communion, unless they abjured the heresy or dogma of their religion which consisted in a belief that Christ and the Sun were one and the same thing. There were, besides, in the East two Christian sects, who passed as adorers of the Sun. The Gnostics and the Basilidenes, who confessedly were the most learned who professed Christianity, as well as the most ancient, practically recognised many of those characteristics which demonstrate the true nature of their worship. To Christ they give the name of Tao, that the oracle of Claros gives to the Sun. They had their three hundred and sixty-five eras or years, in number equal to that of the three hundred and sixty-five days engendered by the Sun, and their Ogdorade, or representative of the spheres. Finally, the Christian religion had such complete conformity with the worship of the Sun that the Emperor Adrian called the Christians adorers of Serapis, that is to say, of the Sun. For Serapis was the same as Osiris, and the ancient medals which carry an impress of Serapis have this legend, *Sun Serapis*. We, therefore, are not the first nor the only party who has ranged Christians in the class of Sun-adorers; and if our assertion appear paradoxical, at least it is not new.

After having explained the fables which form the marvellous part of Christianity and of its dogmas, we will now enter upon an examination of that rather metaphysical, as well as theologically abstract part, known under the phrase, Mystery of the Holy Trinity. We will continue in the same argumentative path that we have travelled as far as here, and hope to convince the reader that Christians as such have nothing properly their own. Those we shall proceed to expose are ignorant plagiarists to whom nothing belongs save the crimes of their priests.

In order to explain the fable respecting the death and resurrection of Christ, we have collected the legends of different religions, which, born in the East, propagated themselves in the West, and we have proved that all the cosmogonic allegories of their religion were incorporated with the mysteries of Atys, of Bacchus, of Adonis, &c. We now propose to show that their theology is founded upon the same basis as that of the Greeks, of the Egyptians, of the Indians, &c.; that it involves the same abstract ideas, and that it borrowed, above all, many dogmas of the Platonicians; that, finally, the Christian religion, in its theological part as in its sacred legend, and in the tragical adventures of its God, contains absolutely nothing which may not be traced in all the other religions which flourished ages before the establishment of Christianity. Their writers and their doctors will on this point also furnish us the authorities proper to convict them of grossest plagiarism.

The dogma of the unity of God, first theological dogma of the Christians, is not peculiar to their sect. It has been admitted by almost all the ancient philosophers, and even the popular religion of the Pagans, in the midst of an apparent polytheism, ever acknowledged a supreme Deity to whom all other Deities were submitted, whether called Gods, Genii, or Angels. Such was great Jupiter with the Greeks and with the Romans; that Jupiter, father of Gods and men, who filled the universe with his substance. He was the sole monarch of nature, and the divine names assumed by other Deities, were rather an association in his title than in his power, each divinity having his particular department, under the dominion of the first God, sovereign and master of all the rest. Scripture itself gives the name of God to beings subordinate to the first God, without impairing the unity of the chief or first cause. It was precisely so with the Jupiter of the Greeks. They repeated unceasingly that Jupiter was one or unique. The oracle of Apollo admits also an uncreated God, born of himself,

who inhabits ethereal fire; a God placed at the head of all the hierarchy.

In the mysteries of the religion of the Greeks was chanted a hymn clearly expressive of that unity. The high priest, addressing the initiated, said, "Glorify the master of the universe; he is one; he exists everywhere."

That the dogma of the unity of God was received by ancient philosophers, and formed the basis of the religion of Orpheus, and of all the mysteries of the Greeks, is a truth acknowledged by Eusebius, Augustine, Lactantius, Justin, Athenagoras, and a crowd of apologetic Christian writers.

We know that Christians will say, that the ancient philosophers who existed many ages before the establishment of Christianity held these dogmas from revelation made to the first man. But, besides that revelation is an absurdity, we answer, it is not necessary to have recourse to the supernatural when we know the series of philosophical abstractions which led the ancients to an acknowledgment of the unity of a first principle; and when, moreover, they have themselves given us the motives which determined them to admit the monad or first unity. These motives are simple; they result from the nature of the operations of the human mind, and the form under which the universal action of the great whole is presented to us. The correspondence of all the parts of the world amongst themselves, and their tendency towards a common centre of motion and of life, has led men who regarded the great whole as an immense God to admit his unity, not conceiving anything beyond the immense assemblage of all beings, or beyond the whole. It was the same with those who regarded the universe as a grand effect. The union of all the parts of the work, and the regularity of the entire system of nature, compelled them also to admit one only cause of one only effect, in such manner that the unity of God passed as a principle into the mind of those who

placed God, or first cause, beyond the world, and in the mind of those who confounded Deity with the world, and distinguished not the workman from the work; as Pliny and all the most ancient philosophers. "All things," says Marcus Aurelius, "are connected among themselves by a sacred chain in such manner that no one part can be a stranger to the other; for all beings have been combined to form one majestic whole, on which depends the beauty of the universe. There is but one world which comprehends all; one only God who is everywhere; one only matter which is eternal; one only law which is the reason common to all beings."

In the few words here quoted from that philosophical emperor, we see the dogma of the unity of God acknowledged as consequence of the unity of the world; that is to say, the philosophical opinion and motive which gave it birth. The Fathers of the Church themselves have inferred the unity of God from the unity of nature, in other words, the unity of the cause from the unity of the effect; for with them the effect is distinguished from the cause—God is separated from the world; that is to say, they admitted an abstract cause, instead of that real Being we call nature or the world. Observe here how St. Athanasius expresses himself upon this point: "As there is but one nature and one order for all things, we must conclude there is but one God, artist and ordainer, and from the unity of the work deduce that of the workman."

It is then apparent that Christians deduced the unity of God from the unity of nature, just as the Pagans had done before them. In all that we perceive nothing more than the natural operation and development of the human mind, and need no intervention of divinity such as is absurdly supposed or implied by revelation.

All the Platonists asserted the unity of the archetype or model upon which God created nature, as well as the unity of the Demiurgos, or God-artist, on the same philosophical

principles. That fact will not be contested by those who have studied Proclus or the other Platonicians.

Ancient philosophers, who, like Pythagoras, employed the theory of numbers to explain theological truths, equally ascribed to the monad the title of cause and of principle. They expressed by the number *one*, or by unity, the first cause, and on grounds of purely abstract mathematics established the unity of God ; for in numbers unity everywhere reproduces itself ; and from unity all sets out. They predicated the very same of the divine unity or monad.

Others, remarking the form of human administrations, and, above all, that of the governments of the East, where, in all time, the monarch has been the only known administrator, conclude it is the same as regards the government of the universe, in which all partial forces seem reunited under the direction and authority of one only chief, in order to produce that perfect harmony whence what we call the system of the world results. Despotism itself favoured that opinion, which described monarchy as the image of the government of the Gods ; for despotism inevitably tends to a concentration of authority and universal confounding of legislative with executive functions.

Thus social order, mathematics, and the reasonings of philosophy, have, by different routes, led the ancients to prefer unity to multiplicity in the first and supreme cause, or, as Simplicius expresses it, the principle of principles. "The first principle," says that philosopher, "being the centre of all the others, it encloses them all in itself by one only union. It is before all. It is the cause of causes ; the principle of principles ; the God of Gods. Let us, then, call simply principles these particular principles ; and let us call principle of principles that general principle or cause of things, itself placed above all things."

It is thus that the universe, or universal cause, enclosing within itself all other causes, which are its parts, was re-

garded as the principle of principles and as supreme unity. Those who created an abstract and ideal world, and a God equally abstract or separated from the world, by whom the world had been created upon an eternal model, reasoned in a similar manner with regard to their ideal cause of the universe. For the material world has always furnished the type of the intellectual world, and it is from that which man sees he forms opinions as to that which he does not see. The dogma of the unity of God, even with the Christians, had its source in reasonings purely human, and reasonings familiar to philosophers long before the era of vulgar Christianity, as is evident from the writings of Pythagoras, of Plato, and of their disciples.

Here it will be useful to repeat that which we have said in our fourth chapter with regard to the soul or life of the world and its intelligence. By ancient philosophers man was compared to the universe and the universe to man, and as they called man the microcosm or little world, of the world itself they made an immense giant who enclosed in great and as its source that which man had in little and by emanation. They remarked in man a principle of motion and of life, held in common with other animals. That principle manifested itself by the breath, in Latin *spiritus*, or the mind. Besides that first principle, they recognised a second—that by which man, reasoning and combining ideas, arrives at wisdom. This faculty of the human soul, possessed in a much more eminent degree by man than other animals, was called, by the Greeks, *logos*, a word rendered into Latin by *ratio* and *verbum*. That Greek word expresses two distinct ideas, rendered in Latin and in French by *raison*, by *verbe* or *parole*—two words entirely different. The second is nothing but an image of the first; for the word is the mirror of the thought. It is the thought rendered sensible to others, and which, in some sort, assumes a body in the air modified by organs of speech. These two principles in man are not two

beings distinguished from himself; though we may, by personifying, make distinct beings of them; but still it is always man, *living* and *thinking*, in whose unity, as in their source, are all his faculties confounded. It is the same with the universe, that immense and unique Deity who encloses all within himself. His life or *spiritus*, as well as his intelligence or *logos*, eternal, immense, as himself, confounded itself in his first or radical unity, called Father, since from it these two faculties emanated. We cannot conceive the Universe-God apart from the conception that he lives the life universal and intelligent of an intelligence equally universal. The life is not the intelligence, but both combined are the life or *spiritus*, and the intelligence or divine wisdom, which belongs essentially to the Divinity of the world, and which makes part of his unique substance, since nothing exists which makes not one of its parts. All these distinctions belong to the Platonician and Pythagorean philosophy, and neither imply nor suppose revelation. No expressions were more familiar to the ancient philosophers than these which follow:—"The universe is a vast animated being, who contains within himself all those principles of life and of intelligence diffused in particular beings. That immense Being, infinitely active and intelligent, is God himself; that is to say, God, word or reason, soul or life universal."

The universal Soul, designated by the term *spiritus*, and compared to the life which animates all nature, chiefly distributed itself in the seven celestial spheres, whose combined action was believed to regulate the destinies of men, and spread the germs of life in all that is born here below. The ancients pictured that unique soul, or breath, which produces the harmony of the spheres, by a flute with seven reeds, that they put between the hands of Pan, or the symbol representative of universal nature. From thence came also the opinion that the soul of the world was contained in the number seven—an idea that the

Christians borrowed from the Platonicians, and that they have expressed by the *sacrum septenarium*, or by their seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. The breath of the Holy Ghost, like the breath of Pan, according to Saint Justin, divided in seven intelligences. The unction of proselytes was accompanied with an invocation to the Holy Ghost, called sometimes Mother of the seven houses—expressions which signify, according to Beausobre, Mother of the seven skies; the word *spiritus*, in Hebrew, being feminine.

Besides the principle of life and of motion, these ancient philosophers admitted a principle of intelligence and of wisdom. They gave to that principle a local habitation, conceiving it to reside in substance luminous as light. The French word *lumière* equally expresses mental or physical light; for intelligence is to the soul that which light is to the eye. It is not, then, astonishing to find Christians declaring of Christ that he is the light which enlightens every man coming into the world, and also that he is the Son of the Father of all Light; because such declarations are true in a metaphysical as physical sense, Christ being the luminous part of the divine essence, rendered sensible to man by the Sun, in which he incorporates or incarnates himself. It is under this last form that he is susceptible of augmentation and of diminution, and that he has been the hero of the sacred fictions upon the birth and upon the death of the God-Sun Christ.

The Stoics placed the intelligence of Jupiter, or the intelligence supremely wise which rules the world, in the luminous substance of the fire ether, which they regarded as the source of *human* intelligence. That opinion concerning the nature of intelligence savours of materialism; but men have reasoned upon the matter which they saw, and which struck their senses, before dreaming dreams with regard to the immaterial Being they have created by abstraction. The more or less of subtlety in matter affects

not the fact that it is matter, and soul with the ancients was nothing else than an emanation of extremely subtile matter that they endowed with the faculty of thought. As we say the breath of life, we say the fire of genius, and the lights of the mind ; and that which to-day passes for no more than a metaphor was formerly a natural and proper mode of designating the principle of life and of intelligence.

Fathers of the Church most learned, and writers most orthodox, say constantly, “ that *God is a light*, and a light very sublime ; that all we have seen of brightness, however brilliant it may be, is a merely feeble ray of that light ; that the Sun is a light without beginning ; that God is a light inaccessible, glorious, and everlasting ; and that all the virtues which environ Deity are lights of the second order—rays of the first eternal, ever-brilliant light.”

This is in general the style of the Fathers, before and after the Council of Nice. “ The word,” said they, “ is the light come into the world. It proceeds from the bosom of that light which exists by itself. It is God, born of God ; it is a light which emanates from a light. The soul is itself luminous, because it is the breath or emanation of the light eternal,” &c.

The theology of Orpheus teaches likewise that light, the most ancient of all beings and the most sublime, is God ; that God inaccessible, who envelops all in his substance, and that we call *light* and *life*. These theological ideas have been plagiarized by the Evangelist John, when he says “ that the life was the light, and that the light was the life, and that the light was the word, or the council and the wisdom of God.” That light was not an abstract and metaphysical light, as Beausobre judiciously remarked, but a real, veritable light, contemplated in heaven by immortal spirits ; at least many Fathers have thus believed, as the same Beausobre proves.

The authorities here cited, though by no means comparable as regards number to those given in our great

work, perhaps sufficiently establish that the dogma received in the most ancient theologies was, that God is a luminous substance, and that light constitutes the intelligent part of the universal soul of the world, or of the Universe-God. From thence it follows that the Sun, which of light is the grand focus and source, should be regarded as the intelligence of the world, or at least as its principal seat. From thence such epithets as *mens mundi*, or intelligence of the world, eye of Jupiter, &c., applied to the Sun by ancient theologians.

All these ideas have passed into the theology of the adorers of the Sun under the name of Christ, which make of Christ the son of the Father, or first God, this first emanation, God consubstantial, or formed of the same luminous substance. Thus the God-Sun is also the *Logos*, the word, or the intelligence of the uncreated being or immense God-Universe; that is to say, he has all those phases of character claimed by Christians for their Redeemer, who it will be found by all who thoroughly analyze their religion is but one, and one of the latest, personifications of solar phenomena.

We know that the Christians, profoundly ignorant with regard to the origin of their religion, refuse all the materialism of that theory, and that, like the Platonicians, they have spiritualized all the ideas of ancient theology. But it is none the less true that the system of spiritualists is based and calculated upon that of the materialists; that it is born of materialism, and from it has borrowed all the divisions, in order to create a God purely chimerical, and a world purely intellectual. Men contemplated visible light before they imagined a light invisible; they adored the Sun which struck their eyes before they created by abstraction an intellectual Sun; they admitted a world they knew before talking, or even thinking, of a God they knew not. But the moderns have reasoned upon things factitious in the same way that the ancients reasoned upon things real,

and given to their intellectual God his principle of intelligence and his principle of life, equally intellectual, from whence they feigned to emanate all the life and all the intelligence which manifest themselves in the visible world. According to them there is a Sun intellectual, of which the Sun visible is but the image; a light incorporeal, of which the light of this world is but the corporeal emanation; finally, a word incorporeal and a word embodied or incarnate, and rendered sensible to man. That body was the corporeal substance of the Sun, above which they placed the uncreated and intellectual light, or *Logos* intellectual. It is that refinement of the Platonic philosophy which has furnished the author of the Evangile of John, the only theological morsel to be found in the Evangelist: "The word took a body; he resided amongst us, and we have seen his glory; it is that of the only Son of the Father."

That word, or that incorporeal light in the disc of the Sun, to which alone it belongs to see his father, says Martianus Capella, in the hymn he addresses to that star, was submitted to time, and necessarily affected by its periodical revolution. The physical Sun emits a light subject to alteration, which seems to be born, to grow, to decrease, and to finish, by turns succumbing to and triumphing over the chief of darkness; but the intellectual Sun, always radiant in the bosom of his Father, or first unity, knows neither change nor diminution, and, inseparable from its principle, shines with eternal splendour.

All the distinctions between the intellectual and corporeal Sun are developed in the superb discourse addressed to the Sun by the Emperor Julian, which contains also the theological principles of ancient priests. It is by a careful study of those principles we shall arrive at just conceptions with regard to Christianity, and be enabled to explain the two natures of Christ and his incarnation, which gave place to that fable according to which Christ was very God incarnate, born of a virgin, to be killed and suffer resurrection.

Proclus, in his commentary upon the Republic of Plato, considers the Sun under two relations, as God non-engendered and God engendered. Under the relation of luminous principle which enlightens all he is sacred ; but under the relation of luminous body, he is not so considered. As uncreated being, he reigns over visible bodies. As something created, he forms part of the mighty mass of being which is regulated and governed. In that Platonic subtlety, we may perceive the distinction as regards the two natures of the Sun, and consequently of Christ. Such was the character of the philosophy taught in the most famous schools, when Christians composed their theological code. The authors of these works, the Fathers, spoke the language of the philosophy of their time. Thus St. Justin, one of the most zealous defenders of Christian dogmas, tells us, that in the Sun there are two natures to distinguish ; the nature of the light and that of the body of the Sun with which it is incorporated. The same, adds he, holds with regard to the two natures of Christ ; word or *logos*, when conceived of as united to his Father, and man or incarnate word when descended amongst us.

The supposed invisible and incorporeal light in the system of the spiritualists is that divine *logos* which resides in the world of intellect and in the bosom of the eternal God. But the light, become sensible to man by concentrating itself in the radiant disc of that divine body, called Sun, is the uncreated light which assumes a bodily shape and resides amongst us. It is that *logos*, incorporeal or incarnate, descended to our visible world which should be the Redeemer of the world. If in the bosom of the invisible being had ever remained that light and heat, which alone are able to remedy the disorders caused by the serpent of winter, our evils would have been without remedy. But the principle of light, in uniting itself with the Sun, and by that organ communicating itself to the sensible universe, dissipates darkness, and by its heat

banishes the cold which had restrained the fruitful force that each year the Spring seems to imprint on the elements. Behold the Redeemer, expected by all peoples, and it is under the form or sign of the Lamb, at Easter, that he consummates his great work of regeneration.

From the foregoing, it is abundantly manifest that Christians have nothing in their theology properly their own, and that so much of it as holds to the subtleties of metaphysics they borrowed from ancient philosophers. Their opinion concerning the *spiritus*, or concerning the soul of the world and universal intelligence, known as the *Word*, or Wisdom of God, was a dogma of Pythagoras and Plato. Macrobius has given us a piece of ancient theology, or Platonism, which encloses a veritable Trinity, of which the Trinity of the Christians is but a copy. He says that the world was formed by the universal soul, which soul answers to our *Spiritus*, or Holy Ghost. Christians, when invoking their Holy Ghost, call him the Creator: *Veni Creator Spiritus*, &c.

Macrobius adds, that from that spirit or soul proceeds intelligence. It is this intelligence which, in a former part of our work, we have proved to be the Intelligence Universal, of which Christians have made their *logos*, or word, Wisdom of God.

Macrobius goes still further—he recalls the three principles to a first unity, which is the sovereign God. After having rested his theory upon that Trinity, composed of the Father, the Son, or Wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit, which creates and vivifies all, he adds: “You see how unity, or the original monad of the first cause, conserves itself entire and indivisible, as far as to the soul, or *spiritus*, which animates the world.” These are the dogmas of the theology of the Pagans, which, passing into that of the Christians, have brought forth, not only the dogma of the three principles, but also that of their reunion in a first unity. It is from that first

unity that the principles emanate. They reside primitively in the unity of the world, *intelligent* and *living*, or of the world animated by the breath of the Universal Soul, and ruled by his intelligence; both of which are confounded in the unity of the great God called world, or in the idea of the Universe, that unique and everlasting source of the intelligence and the life of all beings.

Whatever of material could be found in that antique theology was spiritualised by the modern Platonicians and by the Christians, who created a Trinity of abstractions, which they personified, or, to borrow their own language, which were persons who divided in common the first and sole divinity of the first and universal cause.

Thus the dogma of the Trinity, or the division of the unity of a first principle into a principle of intelligence and a principle of universal life, is merely a theologic fiction.

It is thus that the Indians, personifying the sovereign power of God, gave him three sons. The one is the creating power; the second is the conserving power; and the third is the destroying power. Such is the origin of the famous Trinity of the Indians; for Christians are not the only religionists who have Trinities. The Indians also had theirs ages before Christianity. They had likewise incarnations of the second person of that Trinity, known under the name of Vishnou. In one of these incarnations he takes the name of Chrishnou. They make the Sun the depository of that triple power, and to it ascribe twelve forms and twelve names, one for each month, as Christians give twelve apostles to their Christ. It is at the month of March, or under the Lamb, that he takes the name of Vishnon. In their theology the triple power represents nothing but unity.

The Chinese, too, have a kind of mysterious Trinity. The first Being engenders a second, and the second a third. With us the Holy Spirit or Ghost proceeds also

from the Father and from the Son. The grand term, or the grand unity, say the Chinese, comprehends three ; one is three and three are one. The Jesuit Kircher, in a dissertation upon the unity and the trinity of the first principle, traces to Pythagoras and as far back as the most ancient Egyptians all these metaphysical subtleties. Augustine himself admits that among all peoples might be found opinions concerning divinity very similar to those held by Christians ; that the Pythagoricians, the Platonicians, as well as many other philosophers, Lybian, Egyptian, Indian, Persian, Chaldean, Scythian, &c., held in common with Christians many dogmas regarding the Trinity in unity of the God of Light and Truth. Augustine might have added that all these philosophers existed before Christianity, and hence have concluded with us that from them Christians borrowed their theological dogmas.

From all we have said in this chapter it follows that Christianity, of which the origin is comparatively modern, has most liberally borrowed from ancient religions. We have shown that the notion of a terrestrial paradise, and the introduction of evil by a serpent, which serves as basis for the dogma of the incarnation of Christ and his title of Redeemer, is borrowed from the books of Zoroaster, and contains nothing more than an allegory expressive of physical good and physical evil, which result from the operations of Nature during each solar revolution. We have shown that the Redeemer from evil and vanquisher of darkness is the Sun of Easter or of the equinoctial Lamb. We have shown that the legend of a dead and resuscitated Christ strikingly resembles all the ancient legends and poems, which had for their object the personified star of day, and that the mysteries of his death and resurrection are purely those of the death and resurrection of Osiris, of Bacchus, of Adonis, and, above all, of Mithra, or of the Sun, adored by different peoples under a crowd of different names. We have shown that the dogmas of

Christian theology, and, above all, the dogma of the three principles, or Trinity, belonged to many theologies far more ancient than Christianity, as may be seen in the works of Plotinus, of Macrobius, and other authors who were imbued with the principles professed by Plato many ages before Christianity, and afterwards by his followers, in the time of the first Christian doctors. We have shown, finally, that Christians preach nothing, practise nothing, which may truly be considered their own work, much less the work of a Deity.

After having, as we dare to affirm, demonstrated that the incarnation of Christ is that of the Sun; that his death and resurrection have also the Sun for their object; and, finally, that Christians are in fact nothing but adorers of the Sun, as were the Peruvians, whom they slaughtered, we will proceed to discuss the grand question, Did Christ really exist? If those who put that question are to be understood as demanding to know whether Christ, the object of the worship of Christians, is a real or an ideal being, our reply is, evidently a real being, since we have proved it is the Sun. Without doubt nothing can be more real than the star which enlightens all who come into the world. It has existed; it exists; and it will for ages continue to exist. If, however, it be demanded whether there existed a charlatan or philosopher who called himself Christ, and established under that name the ancient mysteries of Mithra, of Adonis, &c., so far as regards our work it matters little whether he existed or not. Nevertheless we disbelieve the reality of Christ, and we think that, in the same way, and for similar reasons, that the adorers of Hercules believed in the reality of Hercules, author of the twelve works, yet were deceived, since the hero of that poem was the Sun, the adorers of the Sun-Christ were deceived in ascribing a human existence to the solar luminary personified in their legends. For what guarantee have we of the reality of any such man? The

general belief of Christians since the origin of *that* sect, or at least since Christian sectaries have written. Evidently these people assert the reality of a Christ who was born of a virgin, who died, descended into hell, and suffered resurrection—of a Christ whom they call the Lamb, who taketh away the sins of the world, and who is the hero of their legend. But we have proved that that hero is the Sun, and not a man, whether philosopher or impostor; and they themselves would shrink from admitting that to a mere philosopher they ascribe divinity; neither will they admit, so gross is their ignorance, that Christ and the Sun are one.

Shall we search for evidences of the existence of Christ, as philosopher or impostor, in the writings of pagan authors? But none of them, at least none whose works have come down to us, treated that question *ex professo*. For near a century after the epoch when, according to the Christian legend, Jesus of Nazareth appeared on earth, historians were silent with respect to him, and always it is less of him than of self-styled Christians that they speak. If Tacitus mentions Christ it is for the purpose of giving the etymology of the term Christian, that was said to be derived from a certain Christ put to death under Pontius Pilate; that is to say, Tacitus quotes the very language of the legend, and we have seen that that legend was a solar fiction.

If Tacitus had spoken of the Brahmins, he would equally have said, that they derived their name from a certain Brahma, who had lived in India; for Brahma, like Christ, had his legend. And yet is it historically certain that Brahma never really existed as man, since Brahma is but a name of one of the three attributes of divinity personified. Tacitus, in his history of Nero and of the Christian sect, to speak of Christ gives of that name the received etymology, without troubling himself to inquire whether Christ had really existed, or whether it was merely

the name of the hero of a sacred legend. Any such examination was absolutely foreign to the purpose of his work.

It is thus that Suetonius, speaking of the Jews, supposes that they agitated at Rome under Claudius, and that they were moved by a turbulent, seditious, atheistical fellow, called Christ, whose mad violence was the cause why that emperor chased the Christians from Rome. It is difficult to know which of the two historians, Tacitus or Suetonius, is worthy of credit, seeing that they do not agree either as to the place where or as to the time when lived the pretended Saviour. Christians prefer Tacitus, whose account best accords with the solar legend. For ourselves, we say that these two historians have furnished nothing with respect to Christ but vague statements on hearsay authority, without themselves attaching to those statements the least importance; and therefore upon that point their evidence offers no sufficient guarantee of the existence of Christ, as man, whether legislator or impostor. If that existence had been indubitable, we should not find from the time of Tertullian, authors who had most seriously discussed the question and examined the origin of Christianity, declaring that the worship of the Christians was the worship of the Sun, and by no means directed towards a man who had formerly existed. It appears to us that those who make of Christ either a legislator or an impostor, do so because wanting in faith as regards his divinity, and because unable or unwilling to compare his fable with solar fables, for such comparison leaves no escape from the great truth that Christ is the hero of a sacerdotal fiction. It is thus that those who cannot admit as facts the exploits of Hercules, nor see in Hercules a God, are reduced to the necessity of making him a grand prince whose history has been embellished by the marvellous. I know that that manner of explaining everything is very simple, and costs no great efforts; but it does not, for all that, give us a true

result; and Hercules is none the less the Sun personified and adored. But when an error is established and the doctors put enlightened criticism in the category of crimes, when they fabricate some books, altering or burning others, we lack the means by which to retrace our steps, above all, after the lapse of immense periods of time.

If there are ages of light for philosophers, that is to say for a very small number of men, all the ages are ages of darkness for the rest of mankind, especially as respects religion. The credulity of the people in former times may be measured by the impudence of the authors of the first legends. According to their own account, they have heard and seen this which they relate. Yes! these veracious authors heard and saw things the most extravagantly absurd and marvellous, and acknowledged to be impossible by every man who has observed the march of nature. These veracious authors, we are told, were simple men—the legend, it must be confessed, is sufficiently foolish; but men so simple as to believe any or every thing, or to say they have seen that the seeing of which involves impossibility, are able to offer us but poor historical guarantees. We confess ourselves unable to believe the Evangelists were altogether simple and without education. One of them, after having furnished an account suspiciously similar to that which is given in three others, says that the hero of his legend worked a number so immense of other miracles, that to note them down would involve the making of a book too large even for the universe to contain. The hyperbole is rather strong. But how does it happen that of all these miracles none have come down to us, and that the four Evangelists enclosed themselves within the same or nearly the same circle of facts? Was there not considerable address on the part of those who transmitted these writings? and have they not sought to procure a concordance in the recitals of people they would fain have us think did not act in concert? What are these thou-

sands of remarkable events in the life of Christ? And yet the four authors of his life agree to speak only of the same facts. They are concealed by all the disciples of Christ; tradition and the sacred writers are dumb! The boy author of the legend, known as the Gospel according to St. John, has reckoned, without doubt, that he would have no other than believers for readers; that is to say, fools. Finally, to admit the testimony of these sacred books as proof of the existence of Christ, is to believe all, and dishonour reason at the shrine of senseless credulity. For if these authors are to be believed when they tell us that Christ lived among them, how, or on what ground shall we decline to believe that he lived precisely as they relate, and that his career was marked by all sorts of marvellous events. Good Christians believe all, and if they are imbecile, they are at least consistent. We know it is possible that the Evangelists deceived us, or were themselves deceived as regards the details of the life of Christ, without being in error as to the fact of his existence. But again we ask, what confidence can be accorded, even as regards the existence of Christ, to authors who deceive, or who are themselves deceived in all the rest, more especially when we know there is a sacred legend, of which the Sun under the name of Christ is the hero? Are we not naturally led to believe that the adorers of the Sun-God would ascribe to him an historical existence, as adorers of the same Sun, under the names of Bacchus, of Hercules and of Osiris, did to those Gods, although really enlightened ancients, knew well that Bacchus, Osiris, Hercules, and Adonis, never existed as men, and were nothing but the God-Sun personified? Besides, no people could be more ignorant or more credulous than the first Christians, on whom was imposed an Oriental legend concerning Mithra, or the Sun, by theological doctors, who knew very well that the more ancient priests from whom they derived it were worshippers of the Solar Deity. It is an old fable, retouched and

modified by men but partially enlightened, who sought to connect the elements of morality in the person and name of Christ, Son of God, to whom they gave a language, and of whom the mysteries had for ages been celebrated in the obscurity of sanctuaries, under the name of Mithra or Adonis. Early Christians might have connected their legend with this last, if his too well known gallantries had not forbidden such a course. They adopted a mystical name of the Sun, less known, and in the manufacture of their legend associated it with the events of their age, without fearing the critical spirit of a sect among whom to believe was a sacred duty.

It is impossible that imposture and impudence can be pushed further than they were by the first Christian writers, who were in all cases either assumed or real fanatics. Authors cite a letter of St. Denis the Areopagite, who attests that himself and the sophist Apollopharius were at Heliopolis, or town of the Sun, when took place the pretended eclipse of the Sun, which at the full of the moon (that is to say, against all the laws of nature) happened at the death of the Sun, or Christ. He affirms that they distinctly saw the moon forsake its proper or natural orbit to place itself under the Sun, where it remained during three hours, and afterwards returned to the east or point of opposition, where, in the natural course of things, it could not have arrived till fourteen days after. When we find fanatics sufficiently dishonest to fabricate fables such as these in the hope of causing them to be believed, it is clear that a vast number of fools are ready to believe them, and that experiments upon credulity, however impudent, may be safely attempted. In Phlegon we found many marvellous recitals which attest the shameful credulity of those ages. The history of Dion Cassius is no less fruitful in prodigies of every kind—a fact sufficiently indicative of the facility with which people then believed miracles. The pretended prodigies operated by Simon the magician, and the faith

people appeared to have in that tissue of impostures announce that in those days the people were disposed to believe all things; and it is among the people that Christianity was born and that Christianity was propagated. If we read with attention the martyrology of the three first ages of the miracles of Christianity, we shall blush for mankind, that imposture on the one side, and credulity on the other, have so strangely dishonoured; and it is upon such bases as these that have been built up the history and the existence of a God or divine man, of whom no person of sense, no writer unconnected with or strange to the Christian sect, has spoken at the time when Christ is said to have astonished the world by his miracles. Apologists of superstition are reduced to the hard necessity of searching near a hundred years after in Tacitus the etymology of the word Christian, to prove the existence of Christ, or by a master-stroke of pious fraudulency interpolating a passage in Josephus. If this last-named author had known Christ, he would not have failed to enlarge upon his history; above all, having to speak of a man who had played so extraordinary a part on the soil of his country. When sectaries are obliged to have recourse to such pitiable means, it is easy to understand the embarrassment and difficulty they feel when endeavouring to convert those who desire a reason for their belief. Tacitus himself, if there had really lived in Judea a man who so astonishingly signalised himself, whether as legislator or philosopher or unworthy impostor, would scarcely have contented himself with saying Christ was crucified in Judea. What a variety of reflections an extraordinary man thus put to death would have furnished to so philosophical a writer! It is clear that Tacitus attached no importance to the circumstance (if indeed he ever referred to it at all, which some doubt), and that for him Christ was nothing more than a word which gave the etymology of the name of the Christians—a class of sectaries recently known at Rome,

where they were decried and hated in their origin. Tacitus has then simply said that which he had heard said by others, and nothing more, according to Christians themselves. Of course then our guarantees on this matter are Christian, and not either Tacitus or Suetonius. We know that much stress is laid upon the universal faith of the adorers of Christ, who from age to age have attested his existence and his miracles, as they have attested those of many Saints and martyrs, the miracles ascribed to whom this age has little faith in. But we have already observed, in reference to Hercules, that the belief of many generations in matters of religion, proves absolutely nothing except the credulity of believers, and that Hercules was no more than a solar personification *because* the Greeks believed or said something very different. A grand error propagates itself with much more facility than a grand truth, because it is easier to believe than to reason, and because men prefer the marvellous of romance to the simplicity of fact. If Christians adopt that rule of criticism, we are able to oppose to them the firm belief that each people has had, and still has, in the miracles and oracles of their religion. According to our Christian canon of criticism that would prove its truth; but we doubt that Christians would be satisfied with such proof. They say, we know, that to them alone belongs the truth, that they alone appreciate it; but other superstitionists say the same thing. What shall be the judge? We reply—good sense; and not either the received faith, or the received opinion, however general that opinion may be. Christians tell us that to impugn belief in the existence of Christ, and the truth of the recitals of his apostles and the sacred writers, would be to overturn the very foundations of history. If we remember aright, Cicero, the great Roman orator, said, that to deny the truth of the oracles of Delphi would be to tear up or overturn the foundations of history. We demand of Christians whether they admit that, when

attacking these ancient oracles, they are overturning the foundations of history; and whether the Roman orator would have talked about a denial of the truth of their prophecies involving the very foundations of history had he known their true nature. Each man defends his own chimera, not history.

Nothing has been more generally spread, and nothing for a longer time believed, than astrology; yet nothing can possibly rest upon a foundation more fragile, or lead to results more egregiously false. It has put its seal on almost all the monuments of antiquity. Nothing has been wanting in its predictions but truth; and millions have believed in it—millions believe in it still. The same Cicero proves the reality of divination by a crowd of facts that he adduces in support of his assertion, and, above all, by the fact of universal belief; he adds that that art may be traced to the most remote antiquity; that there never was a people without their oracles, their augurs, their prophets, and who had not faith in the fates, in dreams, &c. That is true; but what shall we conclude therefrom, except that credulity is one of the most ancient of all human maladies—an inveterate epidemic, spread over all societies, and that the world, or rather the people who are its occupants, naturally divide into two classes—the class of cheats who dupe, and the class of fools who are duped. We might equally prove the reality of ghosts by the antiquity and universality of the opinion that ghosts have been, and the miracles of St. Roch and of Esculapius by the votaries of ancient temples. Human reason is enclosed within narrow boundaries; credulity is a bottomless abyss which, all-devouring, rejects nothing therein thrown. We decline, then, to believe in the certainty of the science practised by augurs, because grave authors assure us that Accius Navius, in order to prove the infallibility of that science, invited Tarquin to imagine something he, Accius Navius, might

do ; and that Tarquin, having thought about cutting a flint with a razor, the augur accomplished that feat upon the spot. A statue, raised in the public square, perpetuated the memory of that prodigy, and attested to all the Romans that the art of augury was infallible. The swaddling-clothes of Christ, and the wood of his cross, no more prove his existence than the print of the foot of Hercules establishes the reality of that hero ; and the columns raised in the plain of St. Dennis by no means convince me that St. Dennis passed by that place with his head under his arm. The story of this Dennis, or Dionysos, suggests to me nothing more than an ancient legend about the ancient Greek Bacchus and the Egyptian Osiris, whose head every year enjoyed a voyage down the Nile, as far as Biblos, as did that of Orpheus upon waters equally famous ; and it is here we shall have an opportunity of showing how far, in the direction of lunacy, imposture and ignorance will conduct a people when the priest has made himself master of the popular mind.

It is thus that the formula of wishes, *perpetua felicitas*, gives birth to two saints, *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*, or *durable felicity*, which in the invocation are not separated ; that to pray and to give, or *rogare* and *donare*, become St. Rogatian and St. Donatian, which, like St. Felicitas and St. Perpetua, are dealt with as inseparable.

There is abundant evidence that the Pagan Calendar, and the beings physical or moral who were there personified, found place in the Christian Calendar without encountering many obstacles.

We will not further extend these reflections, because our object in this work is not so much to expose the tricks of ignorance and the impudence of imposture as to recal the Christian religion to its true origin, to show the tie by which it is united to all others, and to prove that it is by no means an exceptional religion, but enclosed within the circle of universal religion, or of the universal worship rendered to

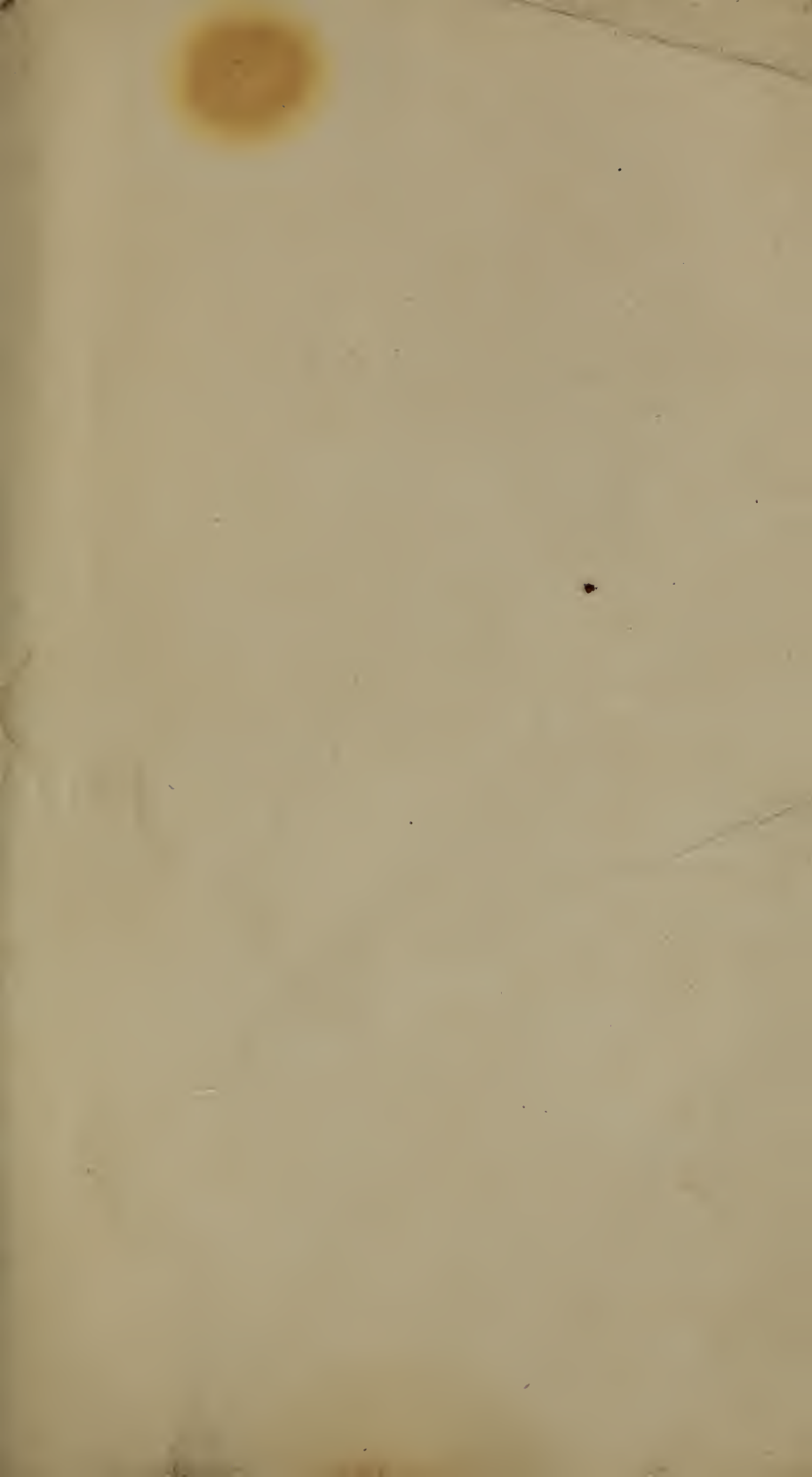
Nature and to the Sun, its principal agent. We shall have attained our end if we have convinced a small number of readers (for the multitude we abandon to the priests), and proved that Christ is nothing but the Sun; that the mysteries of the Christian religion have for their object *light*, their nature being the same as those of the Persians, or of Mithra, as those of Adonis, Osiris, &c.; that Christianity differs from ancient religions only in its names, its forms, and its allegories, and that the foundation is absolutely the same; finally, that a good Christian is like every good Pagan—merely an adorer of the source of all light, that glorious star we call Sun. After that, if they can, let them continue to believe in the existence of a Christ, who is neither the Christ of the legend nor the Christ of the mysteries; to us it matters little. We feel not the want of their second Christ, since belief in him will have nothing in common with belief in the hero of the Christian religion; that is to say, belief in him who is now so generally believed in by the ignorant and the prejudiced. For ourselves, we declare that that second Christ never has existed, and we believe that some at least among our readers are penetrated by the same sentiment, and can as little accept Christ and his miracles as Hercules and his twelve works.

We do not, however, conceal from ourselves that there are among our readers many who, though ready to admit the soundness of our theory so far as regards the foundation of the Christian mystery, will persist in the supposition that Christ really existed, whether wise or foolish, great legislator or impudent impostor, because before reading our book they have accepted that idea, never for a series of years so much as suspecting its falsehood. Belief with such persons is a habit difficult to be got rid of. As their philosophy is capable of no greater extension than to the point just indicated, we feel that any further reasoning upon the subject is unnecessary. Enough has been done to con-

vince every unprejudiced and discerning reader that there are no historical evidences which warrant the belief that Christ as man ever really existed.

Finally, there are multitudes of men so badly organized, that they believe readily no matter what, except it be dictated by good sense and sound reason, and manifest towards philosophy the same sort of alarming distaste as mad dogs manifest towards water. Such people will not read our book, and if they did, would scarcely profit by it. Their mind is the pasture of priests, just as a corpse is the pasture of worms. It is only for the friends of humanity and of reason that we write : the rest belong to another world. Their God is said to have assured them that his kingdom was not of this world ; that is to say, the world where people reason ; and that the poor in spirit are blessed, for to them is the kingdom of heaven ! Let us continue our march, without pausing to count the more or less of suffrages we are able to obtain by an honest and bold attack upon the front of credulity ; and after having exposed to the searching eye of intellect the dark sanctuary of the priest, let us not hope that he will invite the faithful to read our book. It sufficeth for us that a happy revolution, which has been accomplished by reason, entirely to the profit of reason, has taken from priests the power to do mischief, or to pluck from writers of forbidden truths the shameful retractations of Buffon.

FINIS.



Just Published,

THE

CONFESSIONS

OF A

FREETHINKER.

BY

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

Persons of either sex with whom during my past life I have had associations, tender or otherwise, will not, for obvious reasons, appear in these Confessions under the names they bear or have borne. But, though names may be false, all the facts will be true, and it is with facts, not names, the reader has to deal. Were it otherwise, I should shrink from gratifying a prurient curiosity by laying bare family secrets, or wounding the delicacy and honourable pride, whether of families or individuals. I do what I will with my own reputation; I hold myself warranted in doing so; but no one can be warranted in torturing, or wantonly sporting with the feelings of others.—*Introductory Chapter.*

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